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Understanding The Journey Towards School Staff Wellbeing

UNDERSTANDING THE JOURNEY TOWARDS SCHOOL STAFF WELLBEING

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ABSTRACT

Literature highlights school staff stress (e.g. Teacher Support Network, 2009) and the value of staff wellbeing for supporting student wellbeing (e.g. Weare, 2015). However, there is limited literature on how to implement staff wellbeing practices and an absence of in-depth research in this area. The present research explores the facilitators and barriers to the activities and processes that are associated with a staff wellbeing project in a secondary school. The researcher took a dual role in this piece of work: trainee educational psychologist and researcher. This approach enabled close contact with the participants and the gathering of rich data. A single case study methodology was used to enable an in-depth view to be taken. The participants were staff members who had involvement in the staff wellbeing project. The data consisted of interview transcripts and these were analysed using thematic analysis.

The most notable findings specific to the staff wellbeing focus of the project related to the personal nature of staff wellbeing. The project team were aware of the importance of not personalizing the project activities (namely, focusing project activities on meeting their own needs). Protective factors for this included the project leader not being a member of teaching staff (with teacher stressors deemed to increase risk of personalization) and having a small senior leadership team (SLT) presence on the project team, resulting in project team members remaining professional in approach. Due to the project team gathering wider staff views on leadership practices, SLT staff in the team felt they needed to minimise participation. This resulted in the project team being isolated from SLT support.

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

This work was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes. It has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, this thesis is the candidate's own work. Work done with the assistance of others is indicated as such. Any views expressed are those of the author.

Signed:

Date:

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CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

The focus of this study is to explore the activities and processes associated with a staff wellbeing project to inform how staff wellbeing practices are implemented. The intention is: to explore the facilitators and barriers to the activities associated with a wellbeing project from the perspective of project team members; to explore how the process impacts on staff and project outcomes; to explore the role of the Educational Psychologist (EP) in supporting systemic change in schools; and to highlight findings relating to the process of change that are specific to the staff wellbeing focus of the project.

To provide a scholarly and autobiographical context to this study, this introductory chapter has a number of interrelated purposes:

- **To identify the significance of the topic being researched, namely, how a staff wellbeing practice is implemented.**
- **To outline the study's origins and significance.**
- **To describe the research setting.**
- **To acknowledge the methodological orientation of the research.**
- **To offer definitions and comment on key terms.**
- **To identify the aims of the research and, arising from this, to articulate the five research questions.**

The chapter concludes with an outline of the structure of the dissertation.

1.1 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TOPIC BEING RESEARCHED: HOW A STAFF WELLBEING PRACTICE IS IMPLEMENTED

The significance of this topic area is twofold. Firstly, it is relevant to appreciate the importance of implementing staff wellbeing practices in schools. It is also necessary to understand the value of knowing how to implement staff wellbeing practices in schools. This will be presented in the following two sections:

- **The significance of implementing staff wellbeing practices**
- **The significance of knowing how to implement staff wellbeing practices**

1.1.1 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF IMPLEMENTING STAFF WELLBEING PRACTICES

> Well-being in schools starts with the staff: they are in the front line of this work, and it is hard for them to be genuinely motivated to promote emotional and social well-being in others if they feel uncared for and burnt out themselves (Weare, 2015, p. 6).

The above quote assumes the value of student wellbeing. Public Health England's (2014) briefing paper on the link between student health, wellbeing and attainment determined that students who experience positive wellbeing are more likely to achieve academically. Petrides et al. (2004) evidenced a link between emotional intelligence and academic outcome. It was also highlighted in the Public Health England (2014) review that school ethos, environment and culture impact student wellbeing and having an appropriate mindset to learn. Therefore, on the basis that student wellbeing is important, Weare's (2015) assertion that staff wellbeing is equally important presents a case for implementing practices aimed at supporting staff. Further support for this comes from a school study on wellbeing, in which students reported that some staff were "stressed and negative" (Salter-Jones, 2012, p. 23). At the least, staff whose stress levels are identifiable by students are not role models to students in terms of wellbeing (Anderson and Sice, 2016). Findings from a focus group of five EPs and a behaviour and attendance consultant echo Weare's (2015) assertion, in which it was noted that staff need to feel supported themselves to be able to support the emotional needs of students (Salter-Jones, 2012). Kidger et al. (2009) also supported this view in their study. A key theme in their findings was that the emotional needs of teachers are not met and that this results in staff not being able or willing to consider student wellbeing. Furthermore, in this same study, in which 14 teachers from eight secondary schools were interviewed, it was found that the role of teaching and the emotional wellbeing of students are inseparable, making it essential for staff to be mentally healthy themselves to be able to address student wellbeing. This is why it is important to understand how practices that promote staff wellbeing can be implemented.

With literature pointing towards the impact of staff wellbeing on student wellbeing, when considering wellbeing in schools, it is important to start by addressing school staff wellbeing (Weare, 2015). Secondary school staff have highlighted that the pressure of achieving student attainment has been a key stressor impacting their wellbeing – influencing temperament, sickness absence, and sleep. Furthermore, the tension of balancing academic

and pastoral needs has been acknowledged, which has an impact on the wellbeing of staff (Salter-Jones, 2012). Whilst these findings, which were drawn from a focus group of six school staff, cannot be deemed to be representative, there are findings that hold more weight. The Teacher Support Network (2009) surveyed 777 staff members working in education in the UK. They found that in the preceding two years, 87% of staff surveyed had suffered from stress; two-thirds had suffered from anxiety; and 42% with depression. More than 60% of those surveyed specified that their difficulties were a result of issues in the workplace. This study also found sleep to be impacted, with 82% reporting having difficulties sleeping. 53% indicated they had difficulties concentrating and over 60% indicated their emotional difficulties were impacting their physical health, their confidence and their performance at work. Over 50% felt it impacted their personal relationships and over 30% felt their working relationships were affected. Finally, 30% of respondents took time off work due to emotional difficulties. Anderson and Sice (2016) noted the potential impact of staff absence on attainment. To summarise, pressures to achieve student attainment have a negative impact on staff wellbeing and the level of stress experienced results in a negative impact on attainment.

The largest cause of stress found in the Teacher Support Network (2009) survey was workload, indicated by 78% of respondents. In more recent studies, 50% of 399 secondary school teachers in Scotland reported work to be “very stressful” (Mulholland et al., 2017, p. 191). A survey of 865 school leaders and staff found that 44% did not expect to be still working in the profession in five years’ time, however, reduced workload and increased workplace support were cited as factors that could positively influence staff to remain in their jobs (Renn, 2017). The focus of Ofsted inspections is largely on student outcomes, with the exception of taking a view of staff professional development (Ofsted, 2016). Supporting staff wellbeing has not received the level of attention afforded to student wellbeing (Anderson and Sice, 2016). Despite these difficulties, Greenfield (2015) highlights that it is possible to nurture and develop teacher resilience to enable staff to remain motivated and committed to their role. He specifies that this should be of national priority.

1.1.2 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF KNOWING HOW TO IMPLEMENT STAFF WELLBEING PRACTICES

The research exploring how to implement staff wellbeing practices is limited and studies largely take a wider or related focus[1]. There is only one study that focused on the change process associated with developing staff wellbeing. The project used an appreciative inquiry approach (Anderson and Sice, 2016). Therefore, there is a gap in the literature for projects that use an approach other than appreciative inquiry in the development of practices to promote staff wellbeing. The two studies in which implementation of staff-focused practices in schools was considered both researched eight schools (Anderson and Sice, 2016; Hammersley-Fletcher and Lowe, 2006). Therefore, there is a gap in the literature, providing a rationale for a more in-depth study about how staff focused practices in schools are implemented. Hammersley-Fletcher and Lowe's (2006) study on implementing new practices associated with staff workload noted complexities associated with secondary settings. They also suggested that their findings relating to this might be simplistic, providing a rationale for in-depth research of a secondary setting implementing practices to support staff.

Finally, the role of the EP in supporting systemic change has not yet been developed (Farrell et al., 2006), with schools viewing the role of the EP as being associated with the needs of individual children (Davies et al., 2008). There is, however, support for EPs developing their role to incorporate systemic-focused work (Farrell et al., 2006) and this presents as an area for development in the profession.

1.2 THE STUDY'S ORIGINS AND SIGNIFICANCE

My interest in wellbeing stems from an earlier part of my career. I ran young carer support groups implementing therapeutic approaches to promote wellbeing in this disadvantaged group of children and young people (CYP). I felt that to be able to deliver therapeutic interventions, I should also engage in personal development, which I proceeded to do. The benefits that I witnessed in the CYP and myself have shown me the value of such development. This has since underpinned my career and personal life. In my work I liaised with school staff to support their understanding of the needs of the CYP. I encountered barriers from school staff in relation to attending to emotional need, with staff highlighting

[1] Namely, on staff health and wellbeing or on workload.

the pressures they were under regarding improving attainment. This forged my interest in influencing school practices and led me into my training to be an EP. In my training I have witnessed first-hand the importance (and challenges) of school practices, models, systems and systemic development. In deciding on the focus of my doctoral research, I considered how I might draw together these two interests of wellbeing and systemic development.

1.3 THE RESEARCH SETTING

The research setting was an academy secondary school based in a small town in a largely rural county. At the time of the study, the school had approximately 1,450 students in years 7 to 11 and a further 300 students in the sixth form. There were approximately 180 members of staff, of which around 120 were teachers. The last OfSTED inspection rated the school as 'outstanding' in all areas. The school was one that I supported in my two-year EP training placement. My supervisor suggested that the school might be suitable due to their stability as a school, placing them in a strong position to attempt a wellbeing project. I approached the school, inviting them to engage in a wellbeing-focused project that would be at the centre of my research. They were interested in participating and chose a staff wellbeing focus.

1.4 THE METHODOLOGICAL ORIENTATION OF THE RESEARCH

A case study[1] methodology (Thomas, 2011) was used in the present research. A constructionist and interpretivist standpoint[2] underpinned the case study methodology. To support the initiation of the project and to enable as much access to the project as possible, I took a participatory role of participant-researcher, providing trainee EP support to the project in the first half of the research period. Interview transcripts were analysed using a thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) approach. The above components will be explored further in Chapter Three – Methodology and my dual role and influence on the project will be critiqued in Chapter Six – Reflexive Account.

[1] Specifically an 'illustrative-demonstrative' approach, seeking to illustrate and analyse the phenomenon of the process of implementing a staff wellbeing practice.

[2] Holding the view that individuals form constructions and interpretations of events and that these vary from one individual to another.

1.5 DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

This section features the following subsections:

- **A definition of 'wellbeing'**
- **Definitions of implementation and change**
- **Usage of the terminology organisational and systemic change**

1.5.1 A DEFINITION OF 'WELLBEING'

I did not seek to measure or study wellbeing in my research and thus did not need to define wellbeing for the purpose of measurement. However, I did take a definition of wellbeing to the school staff who took part in this research. This was to frame my own thinking in the pursuit of studying the activities and processes associated with a staff wellbeing project. The definition I chose as a basis for this was Weare's (2015) definition:

> 'Social and emotional well-being' refers to a state of positive mental health and wellness. It involves a sense of optimism, confidence, happiness, clarity, vitality, self-worth, achievement, having a meaning and purpose, engagement, having supportive and satisfying relationships with others and understanding oneself, and responding effectively to one's own emotions (Weare, 2015, p. 3).

I chose to use this definition for a number of reasons. Primarily, it underpins Weare's (2015) framework that was used as an impetus for the project studied. It is accessible and thus suitable for use with the school community. Furthermore, it incorporates the social component that is missing from the subjective measure of wellbeing (referred to in Appendix A). Further exploration of the term 'wellbeing' can be found in Appendix A and my underlying understanding of the link between wellbeing and mental health can be found in Appendix B.

1.5.2 DEFINITIONS OF IMPLEMENTATION AND CHANGE

The literature on change and implementation does not define or debate these terms, their meanings seem to be assumed. 'Implementation' is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as "the process of putting a decision or plan into effect; execution" (Oxford Dictionaries, 2018a). This definition implies the effecting of change. The word 'change' is defined as follows: to "make or become different" (verb); and is described as "an act or process through which something becomes different" (noun) (Oxford Dictionaries, 2018b). Notably, the word 'process' features in the definitions of both implementation and change.

1.5.3 USAGE OF THE TERMINOLOGY ORGANISATIONAL AND SYSTEMIC CHANGE

When referring to EP involvement in change, there is a distinction to be made between work that focuses on the individual child and work that considers organisational level change or systemic change. The phrase 'organisational level' change, in relation to EP work, is used in this dissertation to differentiate EP involvement such as supporting the implementation of a practice to meet the needs of a range of people in the school community[1], from EP work focusing on the needs of individual children[2].

Fox (2009) highlights an issue, in the EP field, of the use of the words 'system' and 'systemic'. He indicates that these words are used in two ways and interchangeably in the literature: in relation to school systems and organisational change; and in relation to systems of interaction, which stems from family systems theory and family systems work. Furthermore, there is confusion in that when working with school systems and organisational change, systems of interaction can also be of relevance. In this dissertation, the word 'systemic' or the phrase 'systemic change' refers to working with school systems and organisational change. There is reference to interactions, for instance, communication, but the word systemic or system is not used in these instances.

1.6 THE AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of the present research is to explore the process of implementing a staff wellbeing-related practice in a school. To further elaborate, the present research seeks:

1. **To explore the facilitators and barriers to activities associated with a staff wellbeing project in a secondary school.**
2. **To consider, in the context of a secondary school carrying out a staff wellbeing project, how the process impacts on staff and project outcomes.**
3. **To explore the EP role in supporting systemic change in the context of a secondary school carrying out a staff wellbeing project.**
4. **To explore the features of the process of change studied that are specific to the staff wellbeing focus of the project.**

[1] The staff body in the instance of this study.
[2] An area of EP work that can dominate EP practice, as outlined in Chapter Two – Literature Review.

1.7 THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of the following research questions is to guide the research to meet the above aims of the research:

1. **What facilitates the activities associated with the early stages of a staff wellbeing project being carried out in a secondary school from the perspective of school staff?**
2. **What acts as barriers to the activities associated with the early stages of a staff wellbeing project being carried out in a secondary school from the perspective of school staff?**
3. **In the context of a secondary school carrying out a staff wellbeing project, how does the process impact on staff and project outcomes?**
4. **What is the role of the EP in supporting systemic change in the context of a secondary school carrying out a staff wellbeing project?**
5. **What are the features of the process of change associated with a staff wellbeing project in a secondary school that are specific to the staff wellbeing focus of the project?**

1.8 AN OUTLINE OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

The remainder of this dissertation is structured as follows:

- **Chapter Two – Literature Review**
- **Chapter Three – Methodology**
- **Chapter Four – Findings**
- **Chapter Five – Discussion**
- **Chapter Six – Reflexive Account**
- **Chapter Seven – Conclusion**

CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I will set the current research within a scholarly context. The questions I sought to answer in this literature review are as follows:

1. **What are some of the key underpinning theories and models associated with change in schools?**
2. **What is known about implementation and the process of change that takes place when effecting change in schools?**
3. **What is known about implementation and the process of change that takes place when implementing practices that seek to promote staff wellbeing in organisations?**
4. **What can the literature tell us about Educational Psychologists supporting organisational level change using a consultative approach?**

The following sections will be covered in this literature review to seek to answer the above questions:

- **Theories and models of organisational change**
- **Effecting change in schools:**
    - **Underpinning change.** Including the subsections: Approaches taken and processes associated with change; Top-down or bottom-up direction of change.
    - **Forward drivers of change.** Including the subsections: Visions and goals; Motivation and commitment; Readiness and action.
    - **The challenges of change.** Including the subsections: Changes to the status quo in schools; The messiness of change; A negative impact on staff.
    - **Supportive factors for change.** Including the subsections: Support – for staff subjected to change and for those leading change; Resources required for change; The value of trust in the process of change.
- **Organisational change associated with implementing staff wellbeing practices.** Including the subsections: Implementing staff wellbeing practices in organisations other than schools; Implementing staff wellbeing practices in schools.
- **Educational Psychologists supporting organisational level change.** Including the subsections: Educational Psychologists supporting organisational change through consultation.

The methods used to produce this literature review are outlined in Appendix C and the searches carried out can be found in Appendix D.

2.1 THEORIES AND MODELS OF ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

This section responds to the question: what are some of the key underpinning theories and models associated with change in schools? There are various theories and models referenced in the literature that study change in schools. Dering et al. (2006) highlight two models that underpin the leadership programme at the centre of their study, which sought to support leadership staff to effect change. They first refer to Boyatzis' (1999) model of self-directed change, in which there is a focus on the conditions required for the change of behaviours. The model highlights a need for 'internal dissonance', where the individual experiences a discrepancy between their current state of being and their ideal state of being. This dissonance is believed to produce creative energy, and Boyatzis (1999) highlights that under the right conditions, this is a catalyst for making behavioural changes. Boyatzis' (1982) competencies model is also referred to, highlighting the link between changes to leadership style and organisational climate[1] in supporting staff to flourish. The focus of these models is on leaders making changes to their behaviour and how this impacts on school climate. Where changes are focused on making adjustments to organisational climate, this could be a valid theoretical base to start from. However, this theoretical base does not support other areas[2] of school change.

Anderson and Sice (2016) use the theory of autopoiesis to underpin their research. Autopoiesis is specified to be "a living entity as a self-producing and self-organising system" (Anderson and Sice, 2016, p. 98). As with the models Dering et al. (2006) draw on, in the theory of autopoiesis, the individual is taken as the starting point. Anderson and Sice (2016) highlight that individuals have cognition, resulting in an ongoing process of sense-making and acting within a context. From this interaction with the environment, knowing and knowledge are achieved through awareness, and that awareness needs cultivating. They specify that this is accomplished through verbalising this knowledge and it is through the use of language that creativity and innovation are promoted. Anderson and Sice (2016, p. 98) conclude that to facilitate creativity and innovation, "communication practices" that enable shared meaning to be forged are required. Thus theory and thinking drawn on here more directly point to how a shared vision may be developed. However, they do not go any

[1] Organisational climate is defined by the authors to be how staff feel about working in the organisation.
[2] E.g. more practical based school change projects.

further to indicate how this is realised into actual change. Rogers' (2003) model 'diffusion of innovation' asserts that this same approach of communicating within a social system takes a vision forward into implementation. These theoretical positions could be relevant for any area of change[1].

Willoughby and Tosey (2007) highlight that the appreciative inquiry approach for change used in their study is underpinned by the self-organising systems model and complexity theory. Compared with the theory of autopoiesis (outlined above), the use of complexity theory acknowledges the difficulties associated with change. In more traditional theories, such as 'organisational development', attempts are made to reduce tension in people within organisations to support change to occur (Bennis, 1969, 1965). Conversely, appreciative inquiry is noted to support organisations to become more akin to self-organising systems (Schiller, 2002); the ability of components[2] to organise themselves through interactions without direction from above (Camazine et al., 2003). Willoughby and Tosey (2007) link this with complexity theory. There are a number of variants of complexity theory, which have been brought together under the title of complexity research. Complexity research is characterised by changing components being linked by non-linear relationships and by simple localised interactions between component parts resulting in complex behaviours (Manson, 2001). Whilst complexity research could be relevant to a range of change projects, the self-organising systems model is specifically relevant where change is initiated at the whole school level. It is not relevant to a 'top-down' approach to change.

Fullan's (1993) model for change in education is more practical in focus, advocating for a productive and proactive approach to change. Fullan (1993) also acknowledges the complexity and unpredictability of the process of change and presents eight 'lessons' for understanding change in a dynamic way. These lessons cannot exist in isolation and are intrinsically linked. The first lesson specifies that the more complex change is, the less it can be forced. The second highlights that change is not linear and that at the start of the process, it is not known what will be important. Lesson three determines that we can learn from problems; they can lead to success and can be viewed positively. In lesson four, Fullan (1993) asserts that vision should come later in the process rather than at the beginning and that significant reflection is required first. Lesson five focuses on the importance of both individualism and collectivism; there is a ceiling that can be reached when working alone

[1] For example behavioural or practical changes.
[2] Staff groups in the case of an organisation.

without outside influence, whilst there is risk of uncritical conformity to the group when working collaboratively. Lesson six focuses on the issues of either a top-down or a bottom-up approach and argues for two-way negotiation, pressure and support. Lesson seven highlights the importance of awareness of the external environment and influences when seeking to adapt internal practices. Finally, lesson eight asserts that everyone must be an agent of change. This formula for change presents as accessible for a range of different change initiatives, whilst recognising the complexity of change. MacBeath and Myers (1999) indicated that improving schools relies on the right combinations of individuals and context rather than implementation of a specific model or approach, as such challenging Fullan's (1993) model.

In this section, a number of theories and models for change have been presented. In Boyatzis' (1999, 1982) model for self-directed change and his competencies model, there is a focus on leaders changing their behaviours and approaches to impact organisational climate[1]. This approach only focuses on change to school climate and is not appropriate for other types of change. Anderson and Sice's (2016) and Rogers' (2003) respective theoretical underpinnings are of the theory of autopoiesis and the model of diffusion of innovation, which focus on change occurring through communication. These theories are more suitable for a wider range of change initiatives. Self-organising systems (Camazine et al., 2003) and complexity theory (Manson, 2001) are noted to underpin approaches to change, such as appreciative inquiry. Self-organising systems theory is suitable for a school collaborative approach to change. Finally, Fullan's (1993) formula for change provides a model which is more practical in focus, compared with the more theoretical approaches discussed previously. Next, the research on effecting change in schools will be explored.

2.2 EFFECTING CHANGE IN SCHOOLS

To address the second question in this literature review[2] – what is known about implementation and the process of change that takes place when effecting change in schools? – the literature is divided into four main sections:

- **Underpinning change.** Including the subsections: Approaches taken and processes associated with change; Top-down or bottom-up direction of change.

[1] Defined by the authors to be how staff feel about working in the organisation.
[2] Outlined in the chapter's opening paragraph.

- **Forward drivers of change.** Including the subsections: Visions and goals; Motivation and commitment; Readiness and action.
- **The challenges of change.** Including the subsections: Changes to the status quo in schools; The messiness of change; A negative impact on staff.
- **Supportive factors for change.** Including the subsections: Support – for staff subjected to change and for those leading change; Resources required for change; The value of trust in the process of change.

2.2.1 UNDERPINNING CHANGE

The literature includes some consideration of factors underpinning change. This section is broken down into the following subsections:

- **Approaches taken and processes associated with change**
- **Top-down or bottom-up direction of change**

2.2.1.1 Approaches taken and processes associated with change

In the literature on school change, schools pay limited attention to the process or approach taken. However, in Dangerfield's (2012) study, it was noted that as self-evaluation[1] developed in the English secondary school, so did staff awareness of the value of monitoring and reflecting on the development of practices. A study in which the approach was used as the focus of the paper was Willoughby and Tosey's (2007) research on the use of appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider and Srivastva, 1987) for effecting change in an 11-18 'specialist college'. The approach was noted to facilitate change (as outlined in the forthcoming section "Forward drivers of change"). In both of these studies, staff focus on the approach or process was deemed helpful in the effecting of change. The limited literature on the approaches and processes indicates further exploration could be of value.

2.2.1.2 Top-down or bottom-up direction of change

A feature in the literature was acknowledgment of the direction from which change was initiated or effected, either 'top-down' from leadership (Dering et al., 2006) or external bodies (such as local authorities), or 'bottom-up' from the wider staff team (Barker, 2006; Stoll and Temperley, 2009). This relates to school staff hierarchies, power (Barker, 2005; Willoughby and Tosey, 2007) and control. School staff hierarchies are based on the status of

[1] Development of self-evaluation was the area of change being studied.

roles within schools, which are often accompanied with degrees of, or a lack of, power and responsibility. Historically, there has been some presumption that change comes from above. Dering et al. (2006) claim that leadership programmes (where fundamentally the focus is on leadership effecting change) can be effective. Investment in such a programme accepts or assumes a top-down approach. Despite Dering et al.'s (2006) view that the programmes can be effective, the leadership programme that was featured in their study was not, in itself, sufficient. Of the eight participating schools in the leadership programme studied, only four achieved impact and other factors were cited as important (such as those as outlined in the sections "Readiness and action" and "Support – for staff subjected to change and for those leading change"). It was not specified in this paper which type[1] of schools were selected for the study. The size of schools and demographic information were also not provided. Therefore, it is not possible to consider these findings in relation to the context and assess relevance to other schools. Furthermore, the views collected regarding the leadership programme were those of senior staff, so the experience of non-leadership staff was not considered.

Stoll and Temperley's (2009) research of nine primary schools and two secondary schools considered the relinquishing of control from more senior staff to less senior or experienced staff, indicating that this promotes creativity, which in turn supports change. It is specified that the 11 schools studied were in the southwest of England but the authors did not provide any other contextual information, which may have had an influence on the findings. They did, however, survey and interview 274 staff, providing a large body of data to draw on. There are degrees of relinquishing control, either to staff in leadership positions or wider to other members of the school community. The former is observed in Barker's (2005) research, where the headteachers involved in school reform encouraged deputies and heads of departments to build on the leadership possibilities within their roles. This, compared to the previously oppressive approach in the school, which had left staff feeling frustrated, acted as a launch pad for the change that was wanted by the school community. A thorough capturing of school life through drawing on a range of data sources (documents, observations, attendance at meetings and semi-structured interviews) was presented in this study. No indication of the size of the school was given, making it difficult to assess how transferrable the findings are to other settings. However, it was specified that the school

[1] E.g. primary, secondary or special school.

was a multicultural secondary setting situated on the edge of an urban area, where there is social disadvantage, indicating the demographic context of the findings.

Wider relinquishing of control was facilitated by one of the headteachers in a subsequent Barker (2006) study. A distributed leadership model was adopted and a greater number of school staff were enabled to take leadership roles. Wider involvement still was seen in the school at the centre of Busher et al.'s (2001) study, where efforts were made to involve staff in decision-making. Likewise in Willoughby and Tosey (2007)'s examination of appreciative inquiry, all of the school community were given the opportunity to contribute. Some staff felt threatened by this act of giving power to all staff and students, which challenged previous hierarchical systems. Despite this, it was noted that staff and students valued being listened to. This approach provided a whole school mandate for change. These findings came from what appears to be a thorough study that drew on interviews, plus a range of data from the appreciative inquiry activities; documents, observation, artefacts, photographs, film, over 1,000 appreciative inquiry interview scripts, and documents of outcomes from appreciative inquiry events held. Whilst it seems that lots of data was drawn on, the authors do not specify how many interviews they carried out, only indicating that they interviewed a sample of school community members who took part in the appreciative inquiry events. This lack of transparency, coupled with curiosity as to how such a large amount of appreciative inquiry data was feasibly analysed in this doctoral-based study, leaves some unanswered questions about the research approach.

All of the studies in this school change section of this literature review saw change led by, or at least initiated by, headteachers or leadership teams. Despite this top-down origin, a great many change leaders sought to involve other members of the school community and this tended to be viewed as helpful (Barker, 2006; Busher et al., 2001; Dangerfield, 2012; Dering et al., 2006; Willoughby and Tosey, 2007). This perhaps provides a sense of inclusion and enables members of the school community to invest in and support changes. Even just being keen to involve the wider staff body and foster open communication was reported to positively support the process (Dering et al., 2006). There is also literature pointing to the value of including students and the wider community in school changes (Barker, 2006; Busher et al., 2001; Willoughby and Tosey, 2007). As the focus of the present study is on change associated with staff need, this is of less relevance and is not detailed in this literature review.

To summarise the literature on a top-down/bottom-up direction of change, historical approaches to change tend to have been more top-down in approach. However, this is not necessarily an effective way to achieve change. Whilst change is generally initiated by senior staff, many schools attempted to involve other staff and this was generally felt to be helpful. Radical changes to power distribution can, however, be initially unsettling.

2.2.1.3 Summary of the section "Underpinning change"

In this section, it was highlighted that the noticing of approaches and processes associated with change can be helpful. The direction from which change is effected was also covered, in terms of whether it was top-down[1] or bottom-up[2]. The literature indicated that change tends to be either driven or initiated by senior staff, yet the value of including wider staff in the process is noted. The next section will cover the forward drivers of change.

2.2.2 FORWARD DRIVERS OF CHANGE

This section presents a range of aspects in the literature that are noted to support the process of change. These aspects are presented under the following headings:

- **Visions and goals**
- **Motivation and commitment**
- **Readiness and action**

2.2.2.1 Visions and goals

Having vision and goals has been noted to be of value in effecting change in schools. In their study, Stoll and Temperley (2009) sought to identify conditions which enable creative leaders to promote creativity in others. They identified creativity as an essential component of innovation and change, even indicating that change is creativity:

> By generating a new solution or a new opportunity in their context, they are, by definition, being creative; they are creating something new for them and for their school (Stoll and Temperley, 2009, p. 75).

One of their conditions for creativity is to keep the vision in mind. Dangerfield (2012) carried out an action research project in a secondary school and also observed that vision was a

[1] Driven by management.

[2] Driven by the wider school community.

component part of their process. At the school studied in Barker's (2005) research, targets and plans were set by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and it was noted there was value in the headteachers keeping these goals in mind. Willoughby and Tosey's (2007, p. 504) 'action-oriented, bounded case study' (Stake, 1995) of a school using appreciative inquiry found that the approach enabled them to generate ideas (which could be visions or goals) that could be pursued in the future. Visions and goals are imagined ideas of what is hoped will be achieved in the future. There are no guarantees as to whether this imagined future will be possible to reach, but it enables a group of people to attempt to work to the same end. The literature indicates the value of this.

2.2.2.2 Motivation and commitment

Motivation features as a forward driver in the literature, with motivation providing a reason to act. One study highlighted that motivational headteachers underpin the successful initiation of change (Barker, 2006). Barker's (2005) previous study also highlights the importance of leadership style on staff motivation. Characteristics felt to elicit staff motivation were positivity and enthusiasm. This supports the competency model outlined in the earlier section "Theories and models of organisational change" (Boyatzis, 1982), where leadership style was identified as an influencer of staff motivation. A critique of Barker's (2005) study can be found in the section "Top-down or bottom-up direction of change"[1]. A different motivator was observed in Watson and Geest's (2010) study, where the external influence of the researcher visiting sporadically and enquiring about developments was noted to support the on-going momentum of the project. In addition to motivation, commitment is seen as having value in the field of change and the two seem likely to be paired; without motivation it could be argued people would be unlikely to commit to change. The commitment of headteachers to change was recognised as valuable, as was staff perception of the headteacher's commitment to change (Dering et al., 2006). Commitment of staff was also noted to be important in a study following the development of a model for self-evaluation (Dangerfield, 2012). Furthermore, Willoughby and Tosey (2007) found that using the positive-focused appreciative inquiry approach to support school change fostered commitment to on-going improvement. In summary, the literature clearly points to motivation and commitment being important for effecting change, and suggests that a positive approach facilitates motivation and commitment.

[1] Critique included: strengths - a number of data sources and details about demographics; and a weakness - an absence of transparency of the size of the school.

2.2.2.3 Readiness and action

In the literature on school change, a number of aspects that act as forward drivers are reported in the literature, including readiness to change. In a phenomenological study exploring the participant perspective of a leadership programme designed to support school change, Dering et al. (2006) noted that of the eight schools studied, those that experienced a positive impact from the programme were also reported to have a strong sense of readiness to change. Aspects that are relevant for the fostering of readiness for change are noted: the dominant school culture, priorities, participation within the leadership team, and typical group interactions. Conversely, staff from a school where impact was not seen were noted to find an aspect of the programme where they had to move from a consideration of self to a consideration of the school to be too fast. This example of a school not being ready to change is accompanied with a sense of being stuck and an absence of energy for progressing from the stuck position. Readiness to change on its own is insufficient; change needs to be implemented, although readiness to change may support the implementation process. Dering et al. (2006), in studying what helped and hindered school leaders to effect change, noted that where impact was observed, it happened as a result of staff actioning a carefully thought out plan after attending residentials[1]. Conversely, lack of action on the part of headteachers resulted in a halt to progress. A critique of Dering et al.'s (2006) paper can be found in the earlier section "Top-down or bottom-up direction of change"[2]. The findings presented in this section demonstrate that readiness for change and action are forward drivers of change. These components are not necessarily readily available in instances where change is being attempted and their absence results in a halt to progress.

2.2.2.4 Summary of the section "Forward drivers of change"

In this section, the forward drivers of change were discussed, namely, "Visions and goals" to provide a shared imagined end to aim towards; "Motivation and commitment"; and "Readiness and action". In the following section, the challenges of change will be considered.

[1] Residentials were provided as part of the leadership programme.
[2] Critique indicated a lack of transparency and a lack of collection of wider staff views of the change initiatives limited the findings.

2.2.3 THE CHALLENGES OF CHANGE

The literature on change in schools includes a focus on the challenges of change. I present these in the following sections:

- **Changes to the status quo in schools**
- **The messiness of change**
- **A negative impact on staff**

2.2.3.1 Changes to the status quo in schools

In Barker's (2006, 2005) studies, headteachers were observed to challenge staff and practices, remove power from ineffective managers, and remove staff who were not loyal or hardworking. These challenges to the status quo were accompanied by a positive focus. For example, the headteachers demonstrated that they valued members of the school community and provided support to staff (covered in the forthcoming section "Support"). This combination of challenge and protective factors was shown to enable change. As well as headteachers seeking to redress the status quo of schools, a change of headteacher occurring during Barker's (2006) period of study resulted in a period of instability, reportedly due to the new headteacher not being as dynamic as his predecessor. During this period of instability, the new headteacher struggled to gain the trust of the senior team and there was a period of high staff turnover. These difficulties associated with these changes to the status quo can be understood in relation to family systems theory, in which it is highlighted that roles and behaviours within a unit (for example, a family or school) are sustained. For change to occur, the current ways of functioning need to be challenged and changed. This will impact the prior stable ways of interacting, resulting in instability until a new system of interaction becomes established (Brown, 1999). There is a lack of transparency in Barker's (2006) paper. Whilst there is clarity that 18 members of the school community took part in retrospective interviews, the author indicated that he previously carried out themed interviews and lesson observations as part of his consultancy role. He also indicated that he had access to documentary evidence from the retrospective period studied. However, it was not specified if this historical data was included in the analysis. Furthermore, there was no mention of the analysis approaches used. The retrospective nature of the study also weakened the research, with increased risk of error in the data collected (Kleinbaum et al., 1982). In summary, changes to the status quo of a school can result in instability. This may

be countered through supportive practices, such as through the valuing of school community members and providing support to staff.

2.2.3.2 The messiness of change

Change is complex and the literature includes findings in which researchers highlight a sense of messiness associated with effecting change. Barker (2005, p. 104) referred to a headteacher's experience of effecting change in a secondary school as happening in a "swamp". Barker (2005) referenced Leithwood et al.'s (2005) use of the word 'swamp', which is used repeatedly in their text on school leadership[1]. The repeated use of this bog-focused analogy highlights this dominant view of the messy nature of both leadership and change. Furthermore, Barker (2005, p. 109) also referred to leading change and the approaches used as being "scruffy". A critique of this paper can be found in the section "Top-down or bottom-up direction of change"[2]. How the messiness of change is responded to varies. Ineffective plans and changes have been observed to negatively impact on cohesion and fail to address Ofsted concerns. Consequently, headteachers left in response to their own inadequate attempts to meet standards (Busher et al., 2001). In Barker's (2005) study, the leadership process was described as disjointed, intermittent and interrupted. However, this was not considered a point at which to succumb; instead, time was given to achieving stability. Stoll and Temperley (2009) managed messiness by highlighting that mistakes and failings should be used as opportunities for learning, demonstrating how negative experiences can be reframed to facilitate the resilience needed to see change through.

To summarise, the process of change can be messy. However, this can either be defeating or change leaders may overcome such difficulties and continue change efforts.

2.2.3.3 A negative impact on staff

With the process of effecting change being a messy experience, it is not surprising that this can have a negative and sometimes harmful impact on staff. In a case study of a Welsh comprehensive school on how affective experience impacts practices associated with a change programme, James and Jones (2008) reported senior staff feeling anxious about the

[1] This analogy was originally provided by Schön (1987, p. 3), in reference to problem solving, with difficult problems resisting solution in a "swampy lowland".
[2] Critique includes: strengths - a number of data sources and details about demographics; and a weakness - regarding transparency of the size of the school.

implementation of a classroom observation policy. This impacted their ability to implement it, with them not fully preparing staff for the change, resulting in anxiety amongst the wider body of staff. This piece of research had both robust and weaker components. It was robust in the multi-method approach taken (interviews, surveys, observations and participant-observer notes), providing a multi-perspective triangulated view of the change process. It was, however, unclear how many school participants there were in total, with only the total number of interviewees (19) and surveyed staff (49) provided; there was no indication of whether interviewees also completed the survey. Despite this, the number of participants contributing to each method, in relation to the total staff body (76), suggests that the findings should be relatively representative. It was indicated that the findings were derived through the forming of themes, however, no details of the analysis process were provided and the resulting themes were not explicitly stated. Consequently, some aspects of this study lacked transparency. The impact on leadership staff was also noted in Barker's (2006) study, with a headteacher, who had started out as dynamic, becoming exhausted as the project became more complex. He was encouraged to take extended leave and subsequently left. The headteachers that were studied in Barker's (2005) research were observed to need to manage competing values and dilemmas that arose, including between internal and external stakeholders. The external pressures were noted to negatively impact staff (who experienced mental and physical ill-health and some left their jobs). In Busher et al.'s (2001) research they found a negative impact, with adaptations to the management system leaving staff feeling alienated. In summary, change in schools can impact on staff resulting in negative affective responses and sometimes resulting in staff leaving jobs.

2.2.3.4 Summary of the section "The challenges of change"

In this section on the challenges of change, there was consideration of the change of status quo resulting in instability. The literature pointed to the messiness of change and finally, there was a focus on the negative impact on staff.

2.2.4 SUPPORTIVE FACTORS FOR CHANGE

Whilst the challenges of change present difficulties that can, in certain circumstances, be difficult to overcome, there are also supportive factors that can help the process of change. These are presented in the following sections:

- **Support – for staff subjected to change and for those leading change**

- **Resources required for change**
- **The value of trust in the process of change**

2.2.4.1 Support – for staff subjected to change and for those leading change

The value of support has been highlighted in a number of papers (Barker, 2006; Busher et al., 2001; Dangerfield, 2012; Dering et al., 2006). Dering et al. (2006) noted that in the schools where change was achieved, there was notable support provided by the headteacher. Similarly, the third headteacher in Barker's (2006) 17-year long retrospective study of a school was reported to consolidate changes and sought to be supportive towards staff. Busher et al. (2001) also noticed in their research that the headteachers recognised the needs of staff and supported them. Staff consequently appreciated the headteachers. These qualities seemed to be present when headteachers were new, declining later in headteacher service. Support included helping staff to effect change in their practices (Busher et al., 2001). These findings were reached through the use of both external and internal researchers, with a senior staff member and a governor as participant researchers. Capturing a view from within as well as an external perspective presents as a potentially robust design, meaning that the study benefited from triangulation and the advantages of both perspectives. A dual methodology was also used. In one school, the participant researcher used action research. However, the overarching approach used in both schools was ethnography. The authors acknowledged that the complexity and inconsistency of the approach across the two schools is a weakness of the design. Despite this, a consistent approach of open-ended interviews carried out by external researchers was used in both schools.

Being responsive to school community needs was also highlighted. Prior to the period of reform studied in Barker's (2005) research, the headteacher, who led a regime that was reported by school staff to be oppressive, was also noted to not be responsive to school community needs. In contrast, the two subsequent headteachers who led reform in the school were noted to be responsive to internal and external demands and threats. As well as the importance of providing support for staff, the need for support for staff leading change was also reported on. The third headteacher that was featured in Barker's (2006) study of a school was observed to seek support from an external consultant due to his inability to trust senior staff.

To summarise, the literature indicates the importance of school staff being supported and the need for those leading change to be responsive to school community needs. There is also literature indicating it was valuable for those leading change to be supported.

2.2.4.2 Resources required for change

Much of the literature does not focus on the resources needed for effecting change. However, Stoll and Temperley (2009) did highlight the need for the resources of time and space for creative thinking[1] e.g. for ideas to evolve and be explored. In this study the researchers supported leadership staff to explore and develop their capability to facilitate the conditions that can promote creativity. The views of the researchers on which components are important for creativity, therefore, may have influenced what staff felt was important. However, Dering et al.'s (2006) study also supports this finding. In the schools noted to have successfully effected change, time was given to the planning of change, including the formulation of a strategy. In terms of funding as a resource, it was noted in Busher et al.'s (2001) study that reduced funding appeared to conflict with attempts to effect school improvement. Whilst there is less literature covering the need for resources, compared with the need for support, the need for sufficient time and funding to support the change process is discussed in some literature.

2.2.4.3 The value of trust in the process of change

Trust is a feature referred to in some research on change in schools. Barker (2005) observed that the two headteachers that facilitated school reform both worked on maintaining the trust of school staff. Trust was also afforded to the headteachers by the governors. One of the headteachers initiated ambitious plans and the trust given enabled him to forge ahead. Conversely, Dering et al. (2006) indicated that a lack of trusting relationships underpinned an inability to take decisive action. A headteacher studied in Barker's (2006) research who did not have trust of the senior staff overcame this by seeking external support (as outlined in the prior section “Support”). This enabled him to make necessary changes and there was an evolution of the senior team, after which he was able to build on the trust of the team. A critique of this paper can be found in the earlier section “Changes to the status quo in schools”[2]. Just as in the area of support, where change leaders needed to support staff and needed support themselves, trust also needs to be afforded in both directions. There is a

[1] Creative thinking was previously established as an essential component of change.
[2] The critique outlines the issues associated with a lack of transparency and the retrospective nature of the study.

need for change leaders to gain and maintain the trust of school staff and there is value in those who oversee change leaders to be trusting in approach.

2.2.4.4 Summary of the section "Supportive factors for change"

In this section, the supportive factors for the process of change were outlined, which can protect against some of the challenges of change. Firstly, support for staff was covered; supporting staff during change is important, and change leaders also need support. Next, the resources needed to support change were outlined, specifically time and funding. Finally, trust was explored. Trust in change leaders has been observed in some successful cases of change. Next, change associated with implementing staff wellbeing practices will be covered.

2.2.5 Summary of the section "Effecting change in schools"

In this section "Effecting change in schools", the factors underpinning change were explored: the value considering approaches and processes; and consideration of a top-down or bottom-up direction of change. A number of forward drivers were outlined, including vision and readiness to change. The challenges of change were noted, including the messiness of change and the negative impact of this on staff. Finally, supportive factors for change were outlined, including support and resources.

2.3 Organisational change associated with implementing staff wellbeing practices

To address the third question of this literature review[1] – what is known about implementation and the process of change that takes place when implementing practices that seek to promote staff wellbeing in organisations? – the following is presented in two sections:

- **Implementing staff wellbeing practices in organisations other than schools**
- **Implementing staff wellbeing practices in schools**

[1] The questions answered in this literature review are outlined in the chapter's opening paragraph.

2.3.1 IMPLEMENTING STAFF WELLBEING PRACTICES IN ORGANISATIONS OTHER THAN SCHOOLS

In my literature search, I found three papers relating to implementing staff wellbeing practices in organisations other than schools, each of which I shall outline here.

The first study is Preece et al.'s (2012) research, in which they measured NHS Trust progress of the implementation of guidelines on health (including wellbeing)[1] for all England-based employers, provided by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). The study was a 'clinical audit', which was carried out using an online data-gathering tool. 282 NHS trusts participated, who collectively employ 63% of England-based NHS workers, presenting a sizeable and therefore representative sample. Of the findings that specifically related to the implementation of wellbeing initiatives, 72% of the trusts studied had systems in place to monitor wellbeing. 63% of trusts delivered training to managers on protecting and promoting wellbeing and 60% provided training to promote the sensitive handling of mental health difficulties. Furthermore, 90% provided training to managers highlighting the need to refer staff to occupational health. Where a needs assessment had been carried out and staff were involved in planning and designing wellbeing practices, trusts were more likely to deliver training relating to wellbeing (Preece et al., 2012). This suggests value in staff being involved in the design and planning of practices, matching the view in the wider school change literature regarding the value of involving the wider body of staff. Whilst this clinical audit indicates what the trusts had and had not implemented, the research focus has limitations for the purpose of the present study in that it lacks information about how the different aspects were implemented.

Another NHS study focused on implementation, highlighting the facilitators, barriers and ideal implementation of health and wellbeing services (again, a wider remit than the present study). Quirk et al. (2018) interviewed 12 staff from seven NHS trusts in either leadership or staff wellbeing roles. Findings from their thematic analysis indicated issues relating to austerity, including pressurised working environments not being conducive to delivering staff health and wellbeing practices. Staff not having time to engage in services provided, such as exercise classes, was cited as a barrier. This related to logistical issues, such as shift patterns. Some participants indicated issues around staff not being motivated to engage and

[1] The areas of health addressed were wellbeing, obesity, smoking and physical activity; a wider remit compared with the present research.

that this related to staff not taking responsibility for their own health. With regard to facilitators, there were mixed findings regarding the benefits of government-funded initiatives. There was, however, agreement that support from all levels of the organisation was important and this finding is in line with the aforementioned school change literature on the importance of commitment to change. A change of culture was also noted to be beneficial in helping staff to understand the importance of health and wellbeing and changes. Measures taken to promote healthy eating in the canteen were also referred to. Having a coherent and strategic approach, such as a whole Trust strategy for health and wellbeing, was felt to be helpful. Good communication of health and wellbeing services to the wider staff was seen as important, with getting out into departments to deliver the message in person being cited as the most effective way to reach staff. Finally, carrying out a needs analysis to inform practices was felt to be helpful (Quirk et al., 2018). The findings in this paper are somewhat different to the school change literature. This could relate to the staff health and wellbeing focus and may also relate to the NHS context. A limitation of this study was that data was only collected from leadership staff and those leading wellbeing practices and, therefore, the wider staff view was not represented, beyond what participants observed and reported about the wider staff. However, recruitment to the study was an ongoing process until it was felt theoretical data saturation was achieved, suggesting the findings should be relatively representative of the wider NHS field.

More closely related to the present research, in terms of the educational-based context, is an instrumental case study of the 'Healthy Universities' scheme (Newton et al., 2016). Two universities were selected for the study. The researchers in this study sought to report on how the concept of the Healthy Universities scheme is understood and defined and what can facilitate or create barriers to wellbeing and health. The universities were selected as a result of the differences between them, with one being an 'exemplar' university in relation to delivering Healthy Universities practices, whilst the other did not have the Healthy Universities initiative in place. No other information about the universities was given and thus there lacks any additional insight into contextual influences.

From 48 semi-structured interviews, plus an analysis of corporate strategic documents and observational field notes, the following was found: the exemplar university was committed to establishing the notion of being a Healthy University; this was seen in commitment and structures that actively promoted the concept. Leadership staff, the Healthy University group and some other staff supported the aims, and roles and resources were allocated (a

coordinator, a project worker and a student intern). It was believed to be part of the core business of the university and the university was committed to it, despite financial restraints. Senior management recognised the importance of effective communication (two-way) and there was participation across all levels of the university (Newton et al., 2016). Here are a number of themes that have been featured in the previous section on organisational change in schools, including commitment, participation, and support from leadership. Commitment existed despite financial restraint (Newton et al., 2016), whereas limited resources in the literature on change in schools was felt to be a barrier. As these findings are from a different sector, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions as to whether this was due to the individual difference in outlook of this organisation or whether fundamental differences between universities and schools have an impact (such as different levels of budgetary restraint). These findings were mostly generic regarding effecting change and not specific to the topic of health or wellbeing. The findings were drawn from interviews with staff and students from the two universities, namely 13 senior staff, 12 academic staff, four administrative staff and 14 students. Additionally, five members of the Healthy University coordination group at the exemplar university were interviewed. A strength of this study was that the findings reflected the views of a range of groups in the universities. However, the findings may not be representative of each of these groups due to the limited amount of participants from each group in the context of the size of universities. The specific size of the two universities that participated was not stated, limiting the transparency of this study.

To summarise this section, staff involvement in the process seemed to be of value in the studies (Preece et al., 2012). Quirk et al. (2018) also focused on the wider staff, including highlighting issues of engagement due to lack of time, logistical reasons and not taking individual responsibility for health and wellbeing. A change of culture and good communication were cited as important for implementation. Newton et al.'s (2016) findings were largely in keeping with the generic literature on school change (as outlined in the earlier sections of this literature review), covering aspects such as commitment, support from leadership, and participation. Both Quirk et al. (2018) and Newton et al. (2016) highlighted the value of the health and wellbeing strategy running throughout the whole organisation.

2.3.2 IMPLEMENTING STAFF WELLBEING PRACTICES IN SCHOOLS

There are two relevant studies that look at the development of staff wellbeing practices in schools. The first involved research of the development of the 'workforce remodelling' practices (including involvement of staff) in eight West Midlands-based schools (four primary and four secondary settings). The practices were developed in response to the Department for Education and Skills' (2003) National Agreement: 'Raising Standards and Tackling Workload'. This study is still a little removed from that of the present research due to the workload focus, rather than wellbeing, although links between the two can be drawn.

In the primary schools, staff involved in the reform were noted to be more representative of the wider staff body and seemed clear on their desire for reform to occur[1]. However, it was noted that this was a simplistic observation due to the complexities of high schools, which may negatively impact communication and the managing of change. From interviews with staff (headteachers, senior staff, teachers and support staff), it was noted that not all staff were aware of their school's response to the workforce remodelling agenda and the participation of the wider staff body varied, with whole staff involvement only happening in one small setting. Even in this instance, support staff felt decisions were not fully inclusive. Larger schools reportedly managed the changes through the use of a small team (Hammersley-Fletcher and Lowe, 2006). No indication was given as to whether the varied approaches taken benefited or hindered the process. This focus on involved staff being representative of the wider staff has not been not reflected in the earlier literature in this literature review on other areas of school change. Similarly to the other literature on school change, there was distrust of the programme. The methodological approach used was not specified in the paper and thus the study's transparency comes into question, limiting the credibility of the findings. Despite this, interviews were carried out with headteachers, senior staff, teachers and support staff, providing a view from all key staff groups likely to be impacted by the changes. Furthermore, by studying both primary schools and high schools, the difference in experience as a result of the difference in setting has been considered.

The study that is closest to the present research is Anderson and Sice's (2016) research, which explored a staff wellbeing initiative and reflections on the learning process. Eight primary schools in one local authority were studied in their use of the appreciative inquiry

[1] The authors noted that the Department for Education and Skills established the National Remodelling Team, which asserted change teams should be representative of staff from all levels.

based approach as a framework for developing practices. As per the other literature on school change (outlined earlier in this literature review), headteacher engagement was deemed to be essential. There were challenges, including the threat of Ofsted, work-life balance and ongoing educational change. Furthermore, staff focused on the negative associations of wellbeing (for example, stress) and work was needed to move to a more positive approach (for example, looking at solutions). There was initial distrust in the appreciative inquiry approach, but once this was overcome, positive effects on wellbeing were noted. Trust features in the school change literature in relation to both trust being afforded to those effecting change and headteachers leading change needing to maintain or build on staff trust. Non-teaching staff found engagement difficult, despite attempts at inclusion of this staff group. Additionally, delivering group work sessions was demanding on the school staff wellbeing manager (Anderson and Sice, 2016). This finding relates to issues of pressure and associated negative impact, highlighted earlier within the section "The challenges of change". The intervention methodology (appreciative inquiry and organisation learning process) was specified. It is possible that the findings come from data that was collected as part of the intervention process but this was not clearly stated. It was stated that within the project, the school staff wellbeing manager attempted to survey staff but they were reported to not engage due to "questionnaire fatigue" (Anderson and Sice, 2016, p. 107) as a result of being surveyed many times over previous years. This resulted in the monitoring of progress occurring through interview, observation and discussion. This may have been the data drawn on for the research findings provided, but the lack of clarity is a weakness of this paper.

There are a number of components of this study that add to the literature previously covered on change. The intervention featured in Anderson and Sice's (2016) research is the only project where the use of questionnaire was attempted as part of the staff wellbeing change process, with findings indicating staff non-engagement in this was due to 'questionnaire fatigue' (Anderson and Sice, 2016, p. 107). Staff needing to air grievances (for instance, stress levels) indicates the challenges of attempting to work in a positive-focused way in the area of staff wellbeing, resulting in staff needs not being given a voice. As in Hammersley-Fletcher and Lowe's research (2006), the inclusion of non-teaching staff presented some difficulties that needed overcoming. This theme has only been presented in the literature focusing on change associated with staff workload and wellbeing indicating this as potentially specific to this area of study. Some of the challenges experienced are

featured elsewhere in the school change literature, such as the pressures associated with effecting change.

To summarise this section, the literature on implementing staff wellbeing practices in schools is limited, with there being only one study focusing on staff wellbeing and the other addressing the related topic of staff workload. Both studies demonstrated similarities to the previously covered literature on change in schools, such as having a vision and goals to support change as well as some issues of distrust (of external demands to make changes (Hammersley-Fletcher and Lowe, 2006) and of the appreciative inquiry approach (Anderson and Sice, 2016)). The pressures associated with change and the importance of headteacher commitment (Anderson and Sice, 2016) were also similar to the wider literature on change in schools. The differences included the importance of staff involved being representative (Hammersley-Fletcher and Lowe, 2006) and both sets of researchers emphasised the difficulties of including support staff (Anderson and Sice, 2016; Hammersley-Fletcher and Lowe, 2006). These findings may be due to the importance of representing and including staff views where the focus of change is on staff need. In both Hammersley-Fletcher and Lowe's (2006) and Anderson and Sice's (2016) papers, there is a lack of clarity regarding the methodology used, indicating a gap in the literature for research that can demonstrate a more detailed and rigorous approach as well as more trustworthy findings.

2.3.3 Summary of the section "Organisational change associated with implementing staff wellbeing practices"

In this section, I have presented the limited literature on change associated with implementing staff wellbeing related practices, including literature on non-school organisations and schools. Of the five studies related to implementing wellbeing practices, only one solely focused on wellbeing practices. The other studies addressed health and wellbeing or workload. The findings were often common to those associated with other school change projects. Findings different to the broader school change literature included value placed on involved staff being representative of the wider staff body and issues relating to inclusive participation for support staff. This unique focus on staff views being representative may be reflective of the focus of the projects being on staff need. Finally, I will outline literature on EPs supporting change at the whole school level.

2.4 EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS SUPPORTING ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL CHANGE

Here the phrase 'organisational level' change differentiates this area of EP work from work focused on individual children. To answer the fourth question of this literature review – what can the literature tell us about EPs supporting organisational level change using a consultative approach? – I will firstly outline literature exploring the EP role in relation to organisational level change, followed by the section:

- **Educational Psychologists supporting organisational level change through consultation**

It is not yet widespread practice for EPs to work with schools on organisational level change. In their study, Farrell et al. (2006) sought to explore the function of EPs in the context of the 2003 Every Child Matters legislation (Department for Education and Skills, 2003b). They noted a view that EPs should spend less time on statutory work and recommendations were made that EPs should expand into other areas of work, including systemic work[1]. Data collection entailed surveying headteachers, EPs, local authority officers and other professionals who have involvement with EPs; interviewing of stakeholders and young people who had received recent EP involvement; and visits to eight Local Authorities in England and Wales. The range of people from whom data was gathered was a strength of this study, providing multiple perspectives. However, there were transparency issues; there was no indication of how many people were surveyed and interviewed or the analysis method used.

Despite the aforementioned support for EP involvement in organisational level work, this area of work has been side-lined for individual child casework. In Davies et al.'s (2008) study on EPs supporting six secondary schools with action research projects on inclusion, a participant noted:

> I think old habits die hard and schools very often will focus on the individual child and not see the potential that's there… for EPs to work more systemically (Davies et al., 2008, p. 409).

Headteachers responded indicating that EPs rarely got involved in organisational level work and some felt they would only be interested in this if extra EP allocation were provided, so as not to take from other EP services (Davies et al., 2008). Davies et al. (2008) researched

[1] Work focusing on school systems (for example consideration and development of school systems).

secondary settings in Local Authorities in England and Wales, providing a cross Local Authority view. The authors specified they used a range of methods for data collection including questionnaires and interviews. It is unclear if these were the only methods employed. This puts the transparency of the paper in question. The authors did, however, explicitly indicate who the participants were: the school EPs and headteachers, plus 32 teachers. This multi-perspective view is a strength of this study.

To summarise this literature, EPs spend a limited proportion of their time supporting whole school change. There are divergent views regarding EPs spending increased amounts of time on systemic work.

2.4.1 Educational Psychologists supporting organisational change through consultation

Consultation is used within the EP profession as a means to effect change. Consultation can be used for individual child casework and to support change at the organisation or system level (Larney, 2003). Greenfield (2015), in conclusion to his research on teacher resilience, states that EPs can work systemically with schools through consultation, to develop practices and policies. Wagner (2000) developed consultative practices to seek to better serve teaching staff. She focused on this across her career and brought together her experiences and vision in various publications. In expanding on the collaborative nature of consultation, Wagner (2000) outlined that this approach moves away from the EP as 'expert' and asserts that all parties bring expertise, which is harnessed through this collaborative approach. She highlighted the importance of use of language and indicates EPs should be mindful of using language such as 'consultant' and 'consultee'; rather, they should emphasise collaboration in an attempt to move away from being considered as an expert or as having power. Whilst Wagner's key publications are not research papers and, therefore, do contain an evidence-based approach, Larney (2003) corroborates her model, indicating that a number of components of it (including being collaborative and acknowledging of teacher skills) have been informed by the literature.

Hayes and Stringer's (2016) study used consultation groups, through which change was effected in schools in relation to managing behaviour. Whilst the initial focus of the groups was on target children, the researchers' wider aim was to build capacity. The authors reported some generalised findings relating to the role of the EP, which are relevant to effecting change at any level. The data collection methods used were teacher reflections,

interviews, questionnaires, and researcher reflections. The researcher was also the EP who facilitated the groups. In instances where the EP received a high rating from teachers it was noted that the EP had kept meetings to tight time structures, all attendees participated, and sessions had a relaxed and open atmosphere. The authors acknowledged the limitations of their study, including the small scale of the research (with consultation groups studied in three schools) and uncontrollable variables resulting from the practice-based research design. They also highlighted issues associated with the EP being in the dual role of researcher and the allocated school EP, with the risk of expectancy effects.

Eloquin (2016) outlined a model for supporting organisational change through consultation that combines the use of psychoanalysis, group relations theory and open systems theory, coined systems psychodynamics. The approach seeks to focus on the psychological behaviour of a group and organisation, including consideration of unconscious drivers (Eloquin, 2016; Fraher, 2004; Neumann, 1999). Eloquin (2016) presented two case studies to illustrate his use of the model with two schools in his role as EP. In one of the cases, in a setting supporting 10-16-year-olds with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, relations between senior leadership members acted as a barrier to change. Ways of relating were indicated to come from a place of anxiety, which had led to divisive practices, rather than working together in a supportive way. The focus of use of the model was on providing a safe space to explore issues in a non-personal way. There was focus on the issue from the perspective of staff roles (rather than from a personal perspective) to support the staff to collaboratively explore and overcome the difficulties. This illustrated how staff were supported to bring hidden feelings and fears to the surface to be addressed. Beyond the case study approach, there is no indication of methodology or methods used to gather and analyse the data. Thus, whilst the author presented insights in the paper, further transparent research is necessary to confirm the findings. Given the limited amount of organisational level practices carried out by EPs (as outlined previously), it is unsurprising that there is limited literature on using consultation to support organisational change.

This section has outlined the limited literature on EPs using consultation to support organisational level change. The literature presented indicates how EP consultation was conceived for use at organisational level (as well as for individual child casework). Research indicates that EP consultation for organisational level work has been helpful for providing structure and eliciting open discussion to overcome barriers.

2.4.2 Summary of the section "Educational Psychologists supporting organisational level change"

In this section on EPs supporting organisational change, in the literature, the limited involvement that EPs have in this area of change was indicated, despite them being well placed to do so. The literature on using consultation to effect change highlights that EP consultative practices were conceived for organisational level work as well as for supporting individual casework and can provide structure and support open communication to overcome barriers. Next, the present study will be situated in relation to the literature base.

2.5 Positioning the present study

The emphasis of the literature on change associated with implementing staff wellbeing practices is limited and largely consists of studies with wider or related remits (namely, staff health and wellbeing or workload). There was one study that specifically focuses on change relating purely to staff wellbeing. The initiative studied took an appreciative inquiry approach. Hence there is a gap in the literature for studies focusing on implementing staff wellbeing focused practices in schools and particularly for studying approaches to implementing staff wellbeing practices that do not use an appreciative inquiry approach. Both of the school studies in which change was associated with implementing staff focused initiatives took place in eight schools. Therefore, there is also a gap in the literature in relation to taking a more in-depth approach. In their study on change associated with staff workload, Hammersley-Fletcher and Lowe (2006) highlighted the complexities of effecting change in secondary settings and acknowledged their limited findings relating to this. This provides a rationale for a more in-depth study of a secondary setting implementing a staff wellbeing related practice to illuminate such complexities. Hammersley-Fletcher and Lowe (2006) considered how involved staff were, whilst in their study, Anderson and Sice (2016) sought to explore the learning process that occurred. Therefore, there is a gap in terms of a targeted focus on the facilitators and barriers (which has only been explored in the wider non-school literature (Quirk et al., 2018)) associated with implementing a staff wellbeing practice. Finally, in both Hammersley-Fletcher and Lowe's (2006) and Anderson and Sice's (2016) papers, there was a lack of transparency relating to the methodological approaches taken, presenting a gap to be filled in terms of providing more trustworthy findings.

In the wider literature on non-staff focused change in schools, change projects have tended to be led or facilitated by a member of the school leadership team. In the project at the

centre of the present study, after some initial dominance of involvement by senior leadership staff, a non-leadership member of staff took on the role of project leader. This, therefore, also fills a gap both in the literature on change associated with implementing staff focused practices and in the wider literature on school change. The purpose of the present study is to attempt to meet these identified gaps.

2.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, the present study has been set in a scholarly context. Some theories and models of change were presented, showing some diverse ways to understand change in schools. The topic of "Effecting change in schools" was explored. The key areas covered were: aspects "Underpinning change" (including helpful aspects), factors that served as "Forward drivers of change", literature highlighting "The challenges of change" and some "Supportive factors for change", which may help mitigate some of the challenges experienced. "Organisational change associated with implementing staff wellbeing practices" was also explored. The literature in this area is limited and thus this section includes focus on non-school and school-based studies. All but one of the five relevant studies either related to a wider remit of health and wellbeing or the related topic of staff workload, with only one focusing solely on staff wellbeing. A number of findings reflected the wider school change literature previously covered. Different findings of note included value placed on involved staff being representative of all staff and difficulties relating to the inclusion of support staff. Finally literature on "Educational Psychologists supporting organisational change" was covered. This highlighted the limited involvement EPs have had in organisational level change and consultation as a tool for use in this area was explored. Having presented this literature base, the present study is positioned in relation to the literature. The rationale for the present study is to fill the gaps in the literature relating to studying the activities and process associated with implementing a staff wellbeing practice, including taking a more in-depth view in a secondary school to illustrate the complexities of such change in a secondary setting. The research questions were designed to address the presented gaps and can be found in Chapter Three – Methodology.

CHAPTER THREE – METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, an account of the research methodology will be presented in the following four key sections:

- **My underpinning beliefs and values.** This includes the subsections: My ontological position: constructivism; My epistemological position: interpretivism; Other relevant beliefs and values.
- **The purpose of the research.** This includes the subsection: The research questions.
- **The research design.** This includes the subsections: The methodological approach: case study; The participants; The methods used.
- **Ethical considerations.**

3.1 MY UNDERPINNING BELIEFS AND VALUES

This section seeks to provide the "theoretical framework" within which the research is situated (Oliver, 2008, p. 22). In doing so, I provide a justification for the chosen methodology and also provide transparency about the principles that have a bearing on the research activities and interactions, enabling the reader to make their own judgment as to the influence they may have had (Seale, 1999). My underpinning beliefs and values are presented in the following three sections:

- **My ontological position: constructivism**
- **My epistemological position: interpretivism**
- **Other relevant beliefs and values**

Braun and Clarke (2013) highlight that the two areas of ontology and epistemology are not independent of each other; an overlap will be apparent.

3.1.1 MY ONTOLOGICAL POSITION: CONSTRUCTIVISM

> Ontology determines whether or not we think reality exists entirely separate from human practices and understandings… or whether we think it cannot be separated from human practices, and so knowledge is always going to reflect our perspective (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 27).

Ontology is a branch of philosophy "concerned with what constitutes reality" and is relevant to social research, since researchers can explicitly adopt different positions relating to how they view the social world (Scotland, 2012, p. 9). I identify with the constructivist position, the latter perspective outlined by Braun and Clarke (2013) in the quote above. Seale (1999) outlines that it is acknowledged in the constructivist perspective that observations of the world around us are determined in the context of our pre-existing values and theories of the world. Braun and Clarke (2013) determine that constructs are produced (socially) rather than being inherent, namely, they are not in permanent existence in an objective world, rather, they are formed by us. In my notes made after attendance at a project team meeting, I noticed an instance where it became apparent that a participant had formed a different construction to my own, which demonstrates both this theoretical position and my allegiances with this way of understanding reality. I recorded:

> *"Interestingly, some of the language that [a team member] was using to describe the previous meeting did not fit with my own view of discussions previously had… this showed an example of differing perceptions."*

3.1.2 My epistemological position: interpretivism

Epistemology is the philosophical study of the basis upon which we can indicate we know something (Oliver, 2008). This perspective also challenges a view that there are predetermined fixed facts about the social world, and instead asserts that "the social world exists in a state of fluid interaction, and that it has to be interpreted to be at least partially understood" (Oliver, 2008, p. 23). As with constructivism, in which it is believed we each form our own constructions, an interpretivist view asserts that we each make our own interpretations (Oliver, 1997); "we live in an interpreted world… we are interpreters, understanders" (Ashworth, 2014, p. 19). Flick (2002) asserts, in his diagram of the interaction between experience, construction and interpretation, that the researcher forms constructions of texts (research data), which are then interpreted (understood and ascribed meaning).

3.1.3 Other relevant beliefs and values

For some years, I have been actively pursuing my own journey of personal development to seek to support my own wellbeing. I place value on therapeutic and psychological approaches, having received counselling myself, which supported me in developing my self-

awareness, my response to adversity and my resilience. Therefore, I have come to this study with a preconceived notion of the value of personal development and positive-focused change. I also have interest in effecting change to support others to progress, which has played a large part in my decision to train to be an EP. This has underpinned my involvement in this project in the role of trainee EP and has been a motivator for my research interest in the process of change associated with supporting wellbeing.

3.2 THE PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

In this research, I seek to further develop understanding of the implementation of staff wellbeing practices by studying the processes and activities associated with a staff wellbeing project, in which a staff wellbeing practice was implemented. The focus includes identifying: the facilitators and barriers to project activities; how the process impacts on staff and project outcomes; the EP role in supporting systemic change; and aspects of the process of change that are specific to the staff wellbeing focus of the project. It is hoped this can inform schools attempting such projects and could also be of relevance for local (for example, Local Authority) or national (such as Government) consideration of the development of school staff wellbeing. The project studied was carried out by school staff who formed a project team. The practice implemented was the measuring of staff wellbeing and school related factors that may impact on staff wellbeing (through a staff questionnaire). This was part of a longer process, where the measuring of staff wellbeing could inform any changes required by the school to better support staff wellbeing. The research questions are as follows:

3.2.1 THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To seek to address the research goal, I designed the following research questions:

1. **What facilitates the activities associated with the early stages of a staff wellbeing project being carried out in a secondary school from the perspective of school staff?**
2. **What acts as barriers to the activities associated with the early stages of a staff wellbeing project being carried out in a secondary school from the perspective of school staff?**
3. **In the context of a secondary school carrying out a staff wellbeing project, how does the process impact on staff and project outcomes?**

4. **What is the role of the EP in supporting systemic change in the context of a secondary school carrying out a staff wellbeing project?**
5. **What are the features of the process of change associated with a staff wellbeing project in a secondary school that are specific to the staff wellbeing focus of the project?**

3.3 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design is outlined in this part. This is presented in the following three sections:

- **The methodological approach: case study.** This includes the subsections: Subject; Purpose; Approach; Process; Critique of a case study design; Alternative approaches.
- **The participants.**
- **The methods used.** This includes the subsections: Methods of data collection; The method of data analysis: thematic analysis.

3.3.1 THE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH: CASE STUDY

As outlined in the previous chapter, there is a gap in the literature for an in-depth study. To deliver on this aim, I adopted a case study methodology. Thomas (2011) indicates that, compared to other research methodologies, case studies best provide the opportunity for in-depth study. To demonstrate the case study approach adopted, Thomas' (2011) framework for case study design will be used and this framework is drawn on in order to structure this section as follows:

- **Subject**
- **Purpose**
- **Approach**
- **Process**
- **Critique of a case study design**
- **Alternative approaches**

3.3.1.1 Subject

The present study does not neatly fit into Thomas' (2011) subject categories. However, Thomas (2011) indicates that the tight categorisation of research is “dangerous… because it encourages a view of the world as neater than it really is” (Thomas, 2011, p. 75). This

difficulty regarding categorisation is reflected in the present research, which in some ways, but not fully, relates to Thomas' (2011) 'local knowledge case' and his 'key case' categories. In some respects, the present study relates to the 'local knowledge case' category, in that it is a subject area of some familiarity to me, with wellbeing and change in schools being areas of experience and interest to me respectively (as outlined in Chapter One – Introduction). Furthermore, the school that participated in the study was a school I supported in my EP training placement, providing a level of access and opportunity for in-depth study that may be difficult to achieve in a setting not known to the researcher (Thomas, 2011). In the above respects, the present study fits within the 'local knowledge case' category. However, in relation to this category, Thomas (2011) suggests the object of study (such as the specific circumstances or project) already exists. I initiated the project at the centre of the present study (as outlined in the section "The research setting" featured in Chapter One – Introduction) for the purpose of carrying out the research. I approached the school and asked if they would be interested in carrying out a wellbeing-focused project. Therefore, the project at the centre of the study was not already in existence, as would be expected in a 'local knowledge case'. In some respects, the present study also somewhat fits into Thomas' (2011) 'key case' category. This is due to the 'inherent interest' of this somewhat neglected subject area, as identified in Chapter Two – Literature Review, and the need to improve school staff wellbeing (Teacher Support Network, 2009), as highlighted in Chapter One – Introduction. However, the project studied is not held up as an exemplary or classic case and therefore, whilst bearing some relationship to the 'key case' category, is not fully compatible with this categorisation.

3.3.1.2 Purpose

The purpose of the present study could be categorised as 'instrumental'. By studying 'how' staff wellbeing practices are implemented, the research has a purpose, seeking to contribute to the ability of schools to improve staff wellbeing. The research is, therefore, a tool to support schools to achieve this. Additionally, in Thomas' (2011, p. 99) outline of an 'evaluative' case study design, he indicates that this categorisation is appropriate for research that seeks "to see how something is working or has worked". Indeed the present study seeks to find out 'how' a practice is implemented. However, Thomas (2011) indicates that this 'usually' involves the measuring of something before and after the process to determine the efficacy of the process. The present study was not designed in this way. The research questions sought to find out participant views of the facilitators and barriers to

project activities and, therefore, participants were self-determining the impact the facilitators and barriers had, rather than this being determined through the use of pre and post measures.

3.3.1.3 Approach

The approach used was 'illustrative-demonstrative', seeking to illustrate and analyse the phenomenon of the process associated with implementing a staff wellbeing practice. This approach enables the reader to share the experience and make sense of it through reference to their own knowledge and experience (Thomas, 2011). It is also worth highlighting some links with the 'interpretative case study' approach, also known as an ethnographic approach (Thomas, 2011). I originally sought to take an ethnographic approach, including taking a participatory role; in the first half of the research period I had the dual role of researcher and trainee EP. As trainee EP, I supported the project team meetings. I attended all team meetings and recorded them with the intention of including the meeting data in analysis. However, the amount of data collected proved prohibitive to analysis. I made a choice to omit the meeting data from analysis as the interview data more explicitly presented participant views and, therefore, better served research questions one and two. This resulted in the ethnographic approach largely not being visible in the data and findings. Despite this, I had attended project meetings and the trainee EP participant role provided me with a close-up view of project activities, providing a shared understanding of project activities between the participants and myself. The attendance at meetings and participant role also enabled me to have closer relationships with participants than would otherwise have been achieved, potentially enabling more in-depth (richer) insights to be elicited in the interviews:

> 'what is going on here?' requires researchers to get up close in order to describe and interpret meanings, behaviours, events, institutions and locations (Pole and Morrison, 2003, p. 18).

In addition to the potential for greater depth enabled by taking a participatory role, the decision to have a facilitatory role (in the role of trainee EP) in the initial stages of the project also came from a practical need as a doctoral researcher. By providing the trainee EP role as well as facilitator support to the project, I was in a position to initiate the project. As the request to carry out a project focusing on wellbeing was presented by myself to the

school, providing some support to them to launch the project could be deemed helpful on a pragmatic level, providing more incentive for the school to take part.

Pole and Morrison (2003) highlighted some issues of researching within one's own institution: the need to make the familiar unfamiliar; and the ethical issue of people not realising when they are being studied. As I was relatively new to working with the school and my prior working experience entailed little contact with secondary schools, there was a reasonable degree of unfamiliarity with the setting. With regard to the ethical issue, whilst I did work with the school in the role as trainee EP (providing support to the school as part of my trainee EP placement), the placement work was based around casework, whilst research activities revolved around the project at the centre of this study. Thus, the distinction as to whether I was in researcher role or not was determined by what I was doing at the school (namely, engaging in casework or the present study). This was also clarified with the participants. Where the dual role is explicit, as it was in the present study, ethical issues can be addressed (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993). A further advantage of the explicit communication of the dual role meant that participants could be requested to engage in providing feedback on activities (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993), such as in interview. One critique of the participant-researcher being in the EP role has been the assertion of the potential for expectancy effects (Harris and Rosenthal, 1985; Hayes and Stringer, 2016). Yet if an EP were to support a school to carry out a staff wellbeing project, expectancy effects could be expected in those circumstances too. The EP would likely want the project to be successful, as it would reflect on their ability to support a school in effecting change. Therefore the present study could be argued to reflect such a project being supported by the school's EP, even if the project were not the focus of a piece of research. My account of my trainee EP role in the project studied can be found in Appendix E. In the latter part of the research period, I stepped back from providing trainee EP involvement, moving into a more singular researcher role. This decision was made for two reasons. Firstly, the project team needed to be functioning independently by the time I finished my placement and I wished to provide a transition period prior to this, at which point I would step back to establish whether they were able to function independently, whilst I was still in a position to provide them with support if they needed it. At the point at which I stepped back, I informed them that I would not intervene unless they specifically asked for me to do so. Secondly, stepping down from the trainee EP role presented the opportunity to reduce the complexities associated with having a dual role, enabling me to focus on my role as researcher. The

participant-researcher role that I carried out in the earlier part of the research period is reflected on in Chapter Six – Reflexive Account.

3.3.1.4 Process

A 'single case' model was selected, studying a staff wellbeing project in one school. This was chosen to enable all of the research focus to be on this one project, providing the greatest level of depth of study possible. This design was selected to meet a specific purpose of the present study – filling a depth gap in the literature base – as outlined in the section "Positioning the present study" at the end of Chapter Two – Literature Review. This design lends itself to a research focus "with the emphasis on understanding what is going on" (Thomas, 2011, p. 138), which best serves the research aims and questions on which the study is based. Pole and Morrison (2003, p. 117) consider whether it is still appropriate for studies to focus on what they term "the local" in this era of globalisation of experience and knowledge. Despite the necessity of taking "broader perspectives", they still highlighted the value of studying implementation at the individual institution level. They indicated that this enables the study of the impact of implementation on other factors and enables exploration of diverse meanings and ways of understanding, to inform both within and beyond the individual setting. To capture the relationship between findings relating to the project studied and the wider educational context, where it felt appropriate, I asked participants whether issues they discussed were specific to the school in question or whether they felt their application of the issues was wider. To answer this, participants drew on their experiences of having worked in other schools and on their knowledge about the national educational context.

The present study could also be described as 'diachronic' in that change was studied over time, revealing differences as the study proceeds (Thomas, 2011). As organisational level change is a slow process, it was important to have a length of study that would provide sufficient information about the process as it evolved. The project at the centre of the study was hoped to be a permanent fixture in school life. The research period of a year was determined to illuminate the process in the early stage of implementing change.

3.3.1.5 Critique of a case study design

There is some assertion as to what a case study can and cannot achieve. For example, Barker (2005) specified that whilst a case study cannot refute or validate theoretical models, they can provide "a critical test" of theory (Yin, 2003, p. 41). Brewer (2000) highlighted the issue

of making the particular general, in the instance of case studies, and asserts that it is possible to generalise findings, providing attention is afforded to consideration of the grounds on which those generalisations are made. Brewer (2000) also determined that even where it is acknowledged that achieving generalisability may be difficult when using a case study design, this is countered by the ability to achieve depth and richness, which larger sample studies can sacrifice for the sake of breadth.

3.3.1.6 Alternative approaches

In the determining of my methodological approach, I considered other approaches that may be suitable. As outlined in the earlier section "Approach", I had initially sought to take an ethnographic approach (reasoning for not taking this can be found in the section "Approach"). I also considered whether the collection of practices termed as 'action research' would be suitable to draw on. In essence, I initiated what could be termed an action research project with the project team, in that I sought to initiate a process of change with the participants (Reason and Bradbury, 2009). There were two reasons I did not draw on the collection of practices known as action research in terms of determining my methodological approach. Firstly, the purpose of their action research process was focused on the supporting of staff wellbeing. Yet, in the present research, I sought to study the project activities and process associated with implementing a staff wellbeing practice. This distinction meant that the aims of the project team's action research project did not answer my research questions. Secondly, the present study sought to study the early stages of a staff wellbeing project and did not follow the project long enough to be able to present the typically cyclical process associated with action research (Reason and Bradbury, 2009). Therefore the collection of practices termed as action research did not sufficiently serve the aims of the present research. Whilst the school's project could have been termed an action research project, the project team did not identify it as such. As I was seeking for the project team to take ownership of their process, I did not want to label their project with terminology that they did not identify with themselves.

3.3.2 THE PARTICIPANTS

I sought to recruit all members of the project team to my research. As part of taking an ethical approach, it was explained to participants that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the research at any time (Braun and Clarke, 2013). The cohort of project team members changed a number of times during my research. The project started

out with five members of the senior leadership team (SLT). After the initial meeting, three non-SLT members of staff were recruited to the team, of whom two actually participated. Later, eight more non-SLT members of staff were recruited to the project team, one of whom did not participate. In total, there were 14 members of staff (from a body of approximately 180 staff) involved in the project at some time during the period of data collection, all of whom agreed to be research participants. These staff members were:

- **5 members of the SLT (including the headteacher)**
- **6 teachers**
- **3 non-teaching staff members (one of whom became the project leader)**

Of these 14 staff members, 10 came forward for interview (details indicating which staff were interviewed and when can be found in the forthcoming section "Interviews").

I also attempted to recruit some staff from the wider staff team, to gather their views of the project from their position of being external to the project team. I was only successful in recruiting and interviewing one member of staff from the wider staff body. Due to the limitations associated with this difficulty recruiting non-project team staff, this data was not included in the analysis.

Recruitment to the project team was carried out by members of staff. The gatekeeper recruited the initial SLT and non-SLT members of staff, one of whom became the project leader. The project leader recruited the majority of the non-SLT staff onto the project team and dispensed of most of the SLT members of staff (although this was already naturally occurring as there had been limited attendance at meetings).

3.3.3 THE METHODS USED

Here the methods used will be outlined. This is presented in the following two sections:

- **Methods of data collection.** This includes the subsections: Interviews; Transcription of audio recordings.
- **The method of data analysis: thematic analysis.**

3.3.3.1 Methods of data collection

A range of data sources were gathered (transcriptions of audio recorded project team meetings; transcriptions of audio recorded interviews; researcher field notes; emails exchanged between participants and I; and responses to anonymous questionnaires provided after project meetings). However, the only data that was eventually used in the analysis were the interview transcriptions. The amount of data collected was prohibitive, in terms of carrying out a thorough analysis. In choosing what data to include and discard, the interview data proved to be the best source of participant views (where participants reflected on the project activities in response to questions asked to specifically draw out the facilitators, barriers and their experience of the process of change). This data source, therefore, best served the research questions. Responses to my anonymous questionnaire[1] were few so this data was not included, but has instead been drawn on in Chapter Six – Reflexive Account. In this section, the following is presented:

- **Interviews**
- **Transcription of audio recordings**

3.3.3.1.1 Interviews

> Interviews… use a verbal stimulus (the question) to elicit a verbal response (the answer) from a respondent (Brewer, 2000, p. 63).

The focus of the interview was on collecting participant views about the project and the associated interactions that were occurring within the business of the project. My interpretation of their 'telling' in the interview was supported by my use of questioning to determine what participants meant by what they had told me. To enable me to do this and have flexibility in the interview environment, I used a semi-structured interviewing approach (Pole and Morrison, 2003). I had some key aspects to ask about (to guide the interview), whilst taking a flexible approach (not being dictated to by my guide) (Smith and Osborn, 2014). I generally started with a broad open question to allow participants to talk about aspects of the project process that had the most relevance to them, giving the opportunity for participants to answer in their own terms (Pole and Morrison, 2003). I then followed this with more specific open questioning to draw out their views relating to the key aspects of the project. An example topic guide can be viewed in Appendix F.

[1] Designed to enable me to collect data on the influence of my trainee EP role.

I audio recorded all interviews (with the consent of the participants, as outlined further in the forthcoming "Ethical considerations" section). I carried out most of the interviews at two points in time in my period of data collection. The first was at the end of the summer term (July 2016) to enable me to capture the thoughts of participants before they went away on the six-week summer break. This was relatively early in the research period (two months after the first project team meeting, which was held in May 2016). The second was at the end of the spring term (March and April 2017), which was the end of the data collection period. I also interviewed the project leader at the end of the autumn term (December 2016). This design was determined to reduce loss of information about the process that would have occurred had I only interviewed at the end of the process (Johansen and Wedderkopp, 2010); almost a year after the first meetings and events of the project.

All participants were invited to both interview stages. A selection of the participants responded to this request on each occasion. In the table below, numbers have been assigned to each of the staff members who agreed to be participants. It is demonstrated in the second table which of these were actually interviewed on each occasion. In addition to this, I met with the project leader halfway through the research period. This meeting had originally meant to be a project team meeting, but due to attendance issues only the project leader and I were able to attend. We, therefore, took the opportunity to discuss the project (the then status of the project and the next steps) and this discussion was audio recorded and included as a piece of interview data in the analysis process.

Type of staff member:	**Assigned number:**
Members of the SLT	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Teachers	6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11
Non-teaching staff	12, 13, 14

Table 1: Type of staff member and assigned number

Interview stage:	Participants interviewed:
Early in the research period	3 members of the SLT – 1, 2, 3 2 non-teaching staff members – 12, 13
Halfway through the research period	1 non-teaching staff member – 13
The end of the research period	2 members of the SLT – 1, 3 4 Teachers – 6, 7, 8, 9 2 non-teaching staff members – 13, 14

Table 2: Participants interviewed at each interview stage

Details regarding length of interviews and amount of data extracts from each participant that are included in this dissertation are indicated in the following table.

Participant number:	Length of each interview[1]:	Total amount of time interviewed:	Amount of data extracts included in dissertation[2]:
1	15 minutes 25 minutes	40 minutes	14
2	30 minutes	30 minutes	7
3	15 minutes 20 minutes	35 minutes	6
4	Did not engage in interviews	N/A	N/A

[1] Length of interview was determined by how much participants had to say about the project. Participants who were less involved tended to only require short interviews.

[2] The amount of data extracts from each participant that were included in this dissertation largely reflects the amount of time they were interviewed for.

5	Did not engage in interviews	N/A	N/A
6	30 minutes	30 minutes	6
7	35 minutes	35 minutes	6
8	15 minutes	15 minutes	1
9	25 minutes	25 minutes	9
10	Did not engage in interviews	N/A	N/A
11	Did not engage in interviews	N/A	N/A
12	15 minutes	15 minutes	4
13	15 minutes 40 minutes 1 hour 5 minutes	2 hours	24
14	15 minutes	15 minutes	2

Table 3: Length of interviews and data extracts included in dissertation

3.3.3.1.2 Transcription of audio recordings

Audio recordings were transcribed verbatim, with some 'cleaning' of the data, removing repeated words and fillers (for example "um" and utterances used in conversation that show the person talking that they are being listened to). I employed the services of a University of Bristol approved transcriber, due to the quantity of audio data collected and time limitations. I checked through all of the meeting audio recordings against the transcriptions to correct errors (Murray, 2015) to check the quality and accuracy of the transcribing provided. An interview transcript can be found in Appendix G.

3.3.3.2 The method of data analysis: thematic analysis

> Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 79).

I chose to use a thematic analysis approach for pragmatic purposes; due to the accessibility of the method (Braun and Clarke, 2006) and for reasons of labour intensity. Had I had less data that I wished to analyse, or had the scale of this research project not been limited to the degree that it was, conversation analysis could have been an appropriate approach, which would have enabled me to analyse the nuances occurring, such as within the interactions between team members in the team meetings. I followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis model in the carrying out of the analysis. I remained flexible in my approach, which is recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006), adapting themes and groupings as I proceeded, to attempt to find ways that I conceived would enable me to best make sense of and communicate my findings. I took an "inductive" or "data-driven" approach, attempting to draw themes from the data regardless of prior theory, within the limitations of it not being possible to purely rid oneself of prior knowledge and preconceptions (Braun and Clarke, 2006, pp. 83 and 88). Coding was carried out with my research aims in mind. Examples of my coding can be found in Appendices H and I. A description of the process of analysis can be found in Appendix J. The findings are presented in the next chapter; Chapter Four – Findings. In the production of Chapter Four – Findings, I sought to select the data that best illustrated the key features of the themes and subthemes determined in the analysis.

3.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Prior to the commencement of my research, I sought ethical approval from the Research Ethics Committee that serves the School of Policy Studies at Bristol University, to ensure my approach was compliant with the school's accepted conventions (Oliver, 1997). It was necessary for me to clarify a number of components to the committee. For example, the committee wanted to know whether I would include any of the project team's findings in my dissertation, should they wish to measure the wellbeing of staff or students. I was able to clarify that any measures used by the project team would be for their own purpose and would not be considered a part of my research. Confirmation of ethical approval can be found in Appendix K.

It is necessary to acknowledge the power the researcher has or could be perceived to have (Coolican, 2009). Studying at doctoral level could be perceived by some to have status and thus could create a power imbalance. To address this I informed participants that participation in my research was voluntary, consent was gained prior to collecting data from the participants and participants were advised that they could withdraw from the research at any time. A copy of the information sent to potential participants and the consent form can be found in Appendix L. Consent included agreement to being audio recorded. As part of ensuring I had ongoing consent, I also asked participants each time I intended to audio record activities whether they were happy for me to audio record; a best practice approach (Miller and Bell, 2012).

Participants agreed to data being included in this dissertation that may become publicly available. It was also specified that data would be anonymised and this ethical protocol has been followed. I felt an ethical duty to protect identities as much as possible, particularly as I intend to share my research with the school. In some cases, it was necessary for me to identify the project lead due to the relevance of their role in the content of the data included, but I have minimised this to times when it felt necessary. In cases where data presented as potentially identifiable within the school community, I contacted the individual concerned with a number of options (including the option to have the data removed) and responded accordingly to their request regarding how their data would be presented.

To further ensure confidentiality, I changed the gender of some participants and removed potentially identifying information. This overall issue is of importance as within the data there are some more delicate and contentious comments. This is highlighted as an issue by Newkirk (1996, p. 3). He indicates the conflict between the friendly interchange that occurs at the start of the process when gaining consent, and the lack of awareness, at that stage, that there could later be sensitive or contentious data, or “bad news” to report. To counter this, I returned to the project team with an outline of my findings. There were a number of reasons for doing this, but in the context of this issue of reporting “bad news”, it provided me with an opportunity to ask the team if my findings reflected their experience, in order to be transparent about the focus of my findings. This did have limitations as the findings presented were preliminary findings. Further it was not practicable to present my findings to the participants in full in the limited time window available (which was based on the demands on their time). There was also low attendance at the session.

There were situations that occurred during the project that presented as ethical concerns. It could be argued that the design of the project team's questionnaire did not receive sufficient time and discussion to explore the potential outcome of the design. In my role as trainee EP, I encouraged exploration of what the project team was seeking to measure and achieve. However, the school culture for projects to move at a fast pace (as outlined in the subtheme "Issues of pace", presented in Chapter Four – Findings) was in conflict with this. An additional barrier was the limited attendance at meetings, meaning that the range of views held by the team were not always all represented in discussions (an example of this is outlined in the Chapter Four – Findings section "Support with designing the research"). In my reflections on my roles of researcher and trainee EP, I identified that I wanted the project team to take ownership of the process. Whilst I wanted to support them, which I attempted to do by providing opportunities for exploration of what the team was seeking to measure and achieve, I did not want to be overbearing and forceful in approach. I discussed this with my supervisor and due to me not wanting to overly influence the project activities and process, it was deemed by my supervisor that my decision, in this instance, to try to support but not be overbearing, was appropriate. The aspects influencing this situation (such as the school culture to work at a fast pace and the difficulties of bringing the whole project team together) contributed to the findings that highlight the messiness and complexities associated with effecting change (outlined in both Chapter Two – Literature Review and Chapter Four – Findings). A more forceful approach of insisting on more exploration of the impact of different designs may have overcome this issue. However, this may have negatively impacted in other ways, such as impacting on the school's ownership of the project or my relationship with the project team, which may have also negatively impacted on the project's implementation. Whilst there can be learning from research on change, it seems likely (based on the literature review and the findings from the present study) that there will be some difficult experiences associated with the process of change. It may have been beneficial to place greater emphasis on stating to participants the likelihood of experiencing difficulties in such a project, which is learning I will take forward from this research.

The errors made in the project team's analysis (as outlined in the Chapter Four – Findings section "Support with analysing the data") also presented an ethical issue, due to the situation impacting on trust between staff members and the wellbeing of some participants. Immediately before the errors were made, I queried the project team regarding the handling of the data. This query was directly relevant to the analysis approach that led to errors being

made (asking the project team which way the scaled questionnaire items were leaning and whether they had a questionnaire available to check). I was provided with an answer that suggested knowledge of the direction of the scaling and a copy of the questionnaire was not produced. Again, I did not want to be overly forceful, such as insisting that they refer to the questionnaire, as I had been provided with an answer to my query that suggested they knew this information. The difficulties associated with the errors made, coupled with the findings presented in the section "No allocated time for the project leader", halted project progress (the errors were corrected but no further action was observed) and these situations negatively impacted some staff. This situation did concern me and I consulted my supervisor to establish any action I should take. We agreed that I could present some preliminary findings to the participants; enabling me to highlight some of the difficulties they were facing that needed addressing, to enable the participants to repair and overcome the key barriers faced. Due to the limited time window I had to feed back the preliminary results, I pragmatically limited the findings I presented to those of particular use to them to help them move forward. As well as presenting some preliminary findings to help them consider the issues faced, I also provided an opportunity for reflection on the findings to provide a space for them to move their thinking forward. An alternative approach could have been to insist they used the questionnaire to check the direction of the scale for each item to protect them from making errors in their analysis. The findings (outlined in the Chapter Four – Findings section "Support with analysing the data") indicates that support with carrying out research would be appropriate.

The above concerns (relating to the design of the project questionnaire and the errors made in analysis) are given greater weight due to the present study's research design. I initiated the project, which meant that I had greater ethical responsibility, compared with a project initiated by a school. This level of responsibility could have been reduced by finding a project to study that a school had planned to do of its own accord. I also felt additional ethical responsibility due to my participatory role in the first half of the research period. Again, this would have been less if a different research design had been used. However, a different research design would not completely eradicate ethical responsibility should a researcher observe difficulties that they felt they may be able to positively influence.

3.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this section, I presented an account of the research methodology. A case study methodology was used, underpinned by constructivist and interpretivist beliefs. Within this methodological approach, interviews were carried out and the transcribed data was analysed using thematic analysis. The findings derived from this analysis are presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR – FINDINGS

In this chapter, I will present the findings, which are grouped into seven themes:

1. **The impact of notions of hierarchy.** This theme contains the subthemes: Perspectives of a powerful leadership; The influence of school staff roles on the project; Whose responsibility is it?
2. **Is it really anonymous?**
3. **The importance of communication.** This theme contains the subthemes: Being communicative; Getting the message right; Failure of communication.
4. **Allocating resources.** This theme contains the subthemes: No allocated time; The need for specific support; The need for a representative team.
5. **Achieving forward movement.** This theme contains the subthemes: Goals and visions; Issues of pace; The need to persist.
6. **Out of control.** This theme contains the subthemes: Do not know what we are doing; Structures.
7. **An indirect outcome – developing a wellbeing narrative.**

Within this chapter, there is an element of interpretation in order to illuminate the findings. On the following page is a graphic representation showing the relationship between the themes and subthemes.

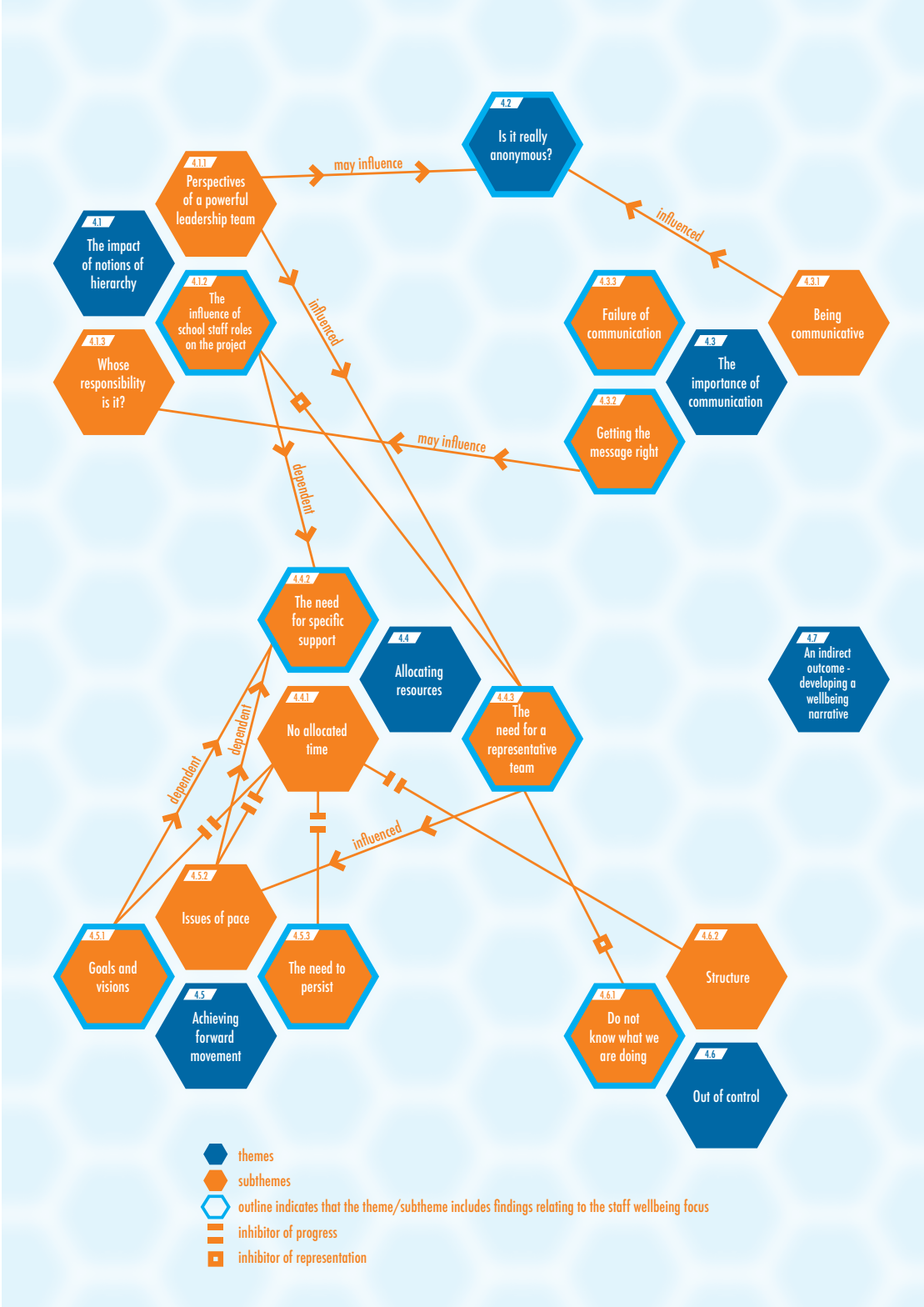

Figure 1: Graphic representation showing the relationship between the themes and subthemes

4.1 Theme: The impact of notions of hierarchy

This theme explores staff notions of school staff hierarchy and how these impacted on the project studied. This theme contains the following three subthemes:

- **Perspectives of a powerful leadership team**
- **The influence of school staff roles on the project**
- **Whose responsibility is it?**

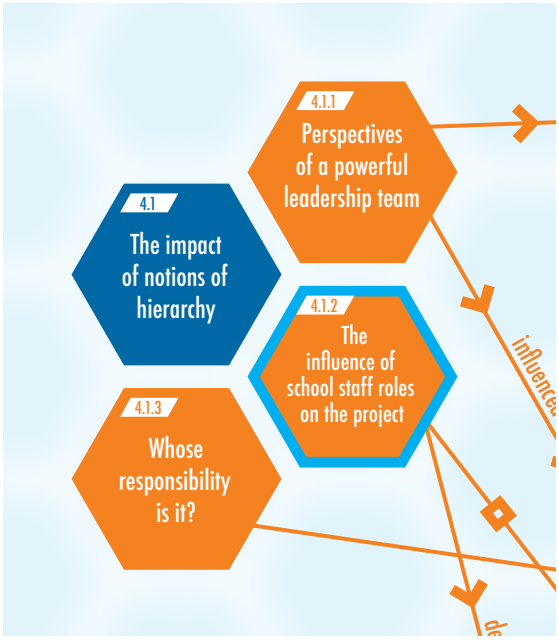

Figure 2: Graphic representation of the theme "The impact of notions of hierarchy"

4.1.1 Subtheme: Perspectives of a powerful leadership team

A range of data provided views that school staff had a negative perception of the SLT. This seemed to largely relate to the SLT's use of their power (or perceptions of this). This subtheme predominantly provides contextual information that is relevant to other subthemes.

Three participants used the phrase "them and us" in their discussions with me and another team member suggested staff felt "spied on":

> *"There is a feeling in here that I get, that they do feel that big brother is watching, in terms of, you know, leadership and stuff." (Non-teaching staff)*

This quoted participant uses an analogy of Orwell's (1949) novel 'Nineteen Eighty-Four', where heavy governmental surveillance and control is a dominant feature, to highlight how she believes staff feel about the SLT.

The SLT was perceived to have power. The following quotes illustrate this point:

> *"I feel, as do many of the staff, that a lot of the issues that we face are because of decisions that are made without consultation, that are placed upon us, rather than with us." (Teacher)*

> *"Participant: Well it really depends on the powers that be, as to what's kind of done with [the questionnaire findings] really, isn't it?...*
>
> *Interviewer: … are you feeling like there will be certain members of the [project] team that will have more influence over what's done with [the questionnaire findings] than others?*
>
> *Participant: Yes... I really want to say it without being negative. Things that tried to be put into place before have kind of just been vetoed." (Non-teaching staff)*

The participant in the latter quote felt that, based on prior experience, SLT staff would have the power to veto decisions. The participant believed there was an inequality of power in the wider school context and that this would also occur within the project team. Four of the participants spoke of the power of the SLT, including a member of the SLT.

One non-SLT member of the project team took a more balanced perspective:

> *"If there was more LT on the committee, people then would be less open to talking… sometimes it feels like it's us versus them, but… I don't think LT actually sit there looking down in an ivory tower, controlling everyone... like [a member of SLT staff] in our department, she's fine" (Teacher)*

Despite this more balanced view, the above quoted participant did recognise the tension between non-SLT and SLT staff, with a dominant SLT staff presence believed to risk the openness of communication.

Whilst some members of the SLT at times found it difficult to accept that there were issues of this nature in the school, one member outlined a historic experience of this issue at another school:

> *"Years ago I had been at a school... I went from being the head of faculty into the SLT. I then walked into the staff room, a group of people… who I would normally sit with… went, '… Shut up. SMT here now' – Senior Management Team. I went, 'Shut up…' And they were going, '… You're one of them now.'" (SLT staff)*

This experience may have been shared to highlight that negative perspectives of leadership do not relate to particular personalities or the specific school at the centre of this study and are instead generalisations universally applied to leadership staff.

4.1.1.1 Summary of subtheme "Perspectives of a powerful leadership"

This subtheme explored staff views relating to the negative perceptions of SLT staff. This was indicated to relate to their use of power or perceptions of this. Overall, the negative perspectives of leadership present as being a part of the wider school context (namely, not just specific to the project team) and were also noted to occur in at least some other schools. The impact of this contextual situation on the project team is explored in the next section: "The influence of school staff roles on the project".

4.1.2 Subtheme: The influence of school staff roles on the project

In the context of the subtheme "Perspectives of a powerful leadership team" (as presented above), the hierarchy of school staff roles influenced the ability to contribute in the team. SLT staff involvement in the project team was given consideration:

> *"Interviewer: Do you feel like your role as one of the senior leadership representatives on the group is, therefore, a bit sensitive on what you can and can't do?*
>
> *Participant: Yeah, I do … a lot of the [questionnaire] questions were about leadership… I don't want to set the agenda. LT don't want to set the agenda… I'm trying my best not to do that." (SLT staff)*

The focus on leadership of some questionnaire questions created a barrier[1] to SLT staff's ability to contribute. This is a finding specific to the team gathering data on potential causal factors relating to staff wellbeing[2] (namely, in this instance, questioning staff about leadership). The caution in the above comment shows an awareness of issues presented in the previous subtheme.

However, a benefit of having an SLT representative present was identified:

> *"You had someone from leadership team… And it also made you very aware that you should remain professional when you are speaking. You couldn't make it about something that was personal." (Teacher)*

This suggests that the personal nature of focusing on staff wellbeing brings with it risks of staff steering the project to address their own needs. Having a member of SLT staff present was noted to positively influence staff behaviour. This was, therefore, a facilitator.

There was also a perspective that it was important that the project be run by a non-SLT member of staff. Two members of the SLT and a non-SLT staff member expressed this view. The project leader acknowledged the benefits of this and also noted difficulties associated with not being a member of the SLT, which are outlined later in the subtheme "The need for specific support". The following was stated by a member of SLT staff:

> *"But then suddenly a couple of [non-SLT] people… came on board, and then it started to pick up... you see if I'd done it, it would have just been seen as, 'Oh, she's just', Whereas … if [a non-leadership member of staff] leads it, it's seen as this is a genuine look... 'Oh right, OK, this is for...they're not doing it to us', so… they'll take it on board." (SLT staff)*

This member of SLT staff provides her view of the importance of staff trusting that changes are being done "for" them rather than "to" them and how the hierarchical position of the school role of the project leader influenced this. A quote in the previous subtheme, from a non-SLT member of staff, highlighted that a lot of decisions are "placed upon us rather than

[1] Throughout this chapter, facilitators and barriers to implementation are specifically noted to situate these findings within research questions one and two.

[2] Findings relating to the process that are specific to the staff wellbeing focus of the project are noted throughout this chapter to situate these findings within the research questions.

with us". The attempt to not do that on this occasion seemed specific to this project, perhaps due to the personal nature of the staff wellbeing focus of the project. Thus having a non-SLT member of staff leading the project was felt to be a facilitator.

One member of the team felt that the project leader not being a teacher was also a facilitator:

> *"Participant: I think it's been really helpful to have someone lead it that is not a teacher.*
>
> *Interviewer: And what do you think might have been different if it had been a teacher leading it?*
>
> *Participant: It might have just turned into a moaning session… It might have then started to become a little bit more personalised, about what that particular person experiences in their particular subject, or their role.*
>
> *Interviewer: Do you think that's something about here specifically, or in schools in general?*
>
> *Participant: Everywhere... Because there is just such pressures on teachers in different ways." (Teacher)*

This participant felt it would be harder for a teacher to manage the role of project leader in an objective way due to the national pressures teachers are under. This may be particularly relevant with the project focus being on staff wellbeing, with there being a potential link between wellbeing and pressure.

Finally, a staff member at the bottom of the staff hierarchy highlighted how he perceived his role to impact his voice in the team:

> *"My position in school… I suppose there's a part of me that thinks I might not be taken seriously… I suppose because there's a lot of management there, and people with responsibility, and I don't really have that much responsibility... Well it's the them and us again, isn't it." (Non-teaching staff)*

Thus he directly links a perspective of "them and us" with his concern as to his ability to be viewed as an equal on the team. This demonstrates how hierarchies of power can negatively impact on people at the lower end of the hierarchy, such as on their belief about their ability to have their view given equal weight. As participants felt it important that the team was representative, so that the needs of the wider staff team were taken into consideration (as outlined in the subtheme "The need for a representative team"), it was, therefore, important for the team to be as inclusive as possible. Hence this issue is highlighted as a barrier to effective implementation due to there being a question as to whether this team member felt able to represent his sector of the wider school staff.

4.1.2.1 Summary of subtheme "The influence of school staff roles on the project"

To conclude, school staff role, specifically relating to hierarchies and perspectives of SLT staff, influenced the ability of some staff to contribute to the team. It also influenced who was most appropriate to lead the project. The risk of team members personalising project activities (namely, directing activities to address their own individual needs) impacted on who should lead the project. This is specific to focusing on a topic that is personal to staff, for instance, staff wellbeing. Furthermore, the presence of a member of the SLT was felt to be helpful to minimise the risk of staff personalising project activities.

4.1.3 Subtheme: Whose responsibility is it?

The topic of where responsibility for change and wellbeing lay was discussed at interview. Relating to the subtheme "Perspectives of a powerful leadership team", towards the end of the research period, non-SLT staff specified that the responsibility for wellbeing and change rested with the SLT:

> *"What would have been fantastic was to launch it, from LT… Real drive from the people that can make those changes." (Teacher)*

The above quote indicates that it is SLT staff who are in a position to make changes and who need to communicate the value of the project to give it importance. All non-SLT participants expressed that responsibility rested with SLT staff. This view was noticed by a member of SLT staff:

"I still find it really intriguing that people consider … the wellbeing of … not far off 200 staff – to really be … the leadership team's job… I felt...that came quite strongly through from the [project team].'…Well we've had these suggestions, and you [the SLT] need to be doing this and this.'" (SLT staff)

Challenges associated with non-SLT staff having responsibility were raised:

"Leadership …will be much more aware of … what can and can't be done… I may be … project lead, but that doesn't necessarily give me the authority to make decisions." (Non-teaching staff)

Her lack of insight into what constraints there may be presented a barrier that could not be overcome simply by her being determined as project leader. Behind the SLT wish that responsibility for the project would be taken by non-SLT staff (as outlined in the previous subtheme) was their hope that all staff would be responsible for staff wellbeing:

"Someone [asked] 'you'd mentioned about staff wellbeing … is it still your priority?' And my answer was… 'well it's not my responsibility, it's everyone's responsibility. Yes, of course it is mine, but it's not mine alone, and it's not the leadership team's alone… it's everyone looking after everyone else'. So that's why I'm really pleased that [non-SLT] people have taken [the project] on." (SLT staff)

The SLT desire for the project to be driven by non-SLT staff conflicted with the expectation held by non-SLT staff members that the SLT were responsible for change. Towards the end of the period studied, neither SLT staff nor the project team were forging a way forward and the non-SLT staff views that responsibility lay with the SLT were being expressed at this time. The conflicting views regarding where responsibility lay could provide explanation for this stuck position. For responsibility to sit comfortably with non-SLT staff, a change of ethos and narrative would be necessary, in relation to where power resides and the authority to make decisions. Parameters of what is possible would also need to be shared with the project leader.

4.1.3.1 Summary of subtheme "Whose responsibility is it?"

This issue of where responsibility lay related to hierarchy, with non-SLT staff feeling they did not have sufficient authority, whilst SLT staff wanted responsibility distributed across the school. This does not present as specific to the topic of staff wellbeing. Any new practices being developed in a school would need consideration as to whom would be responsible for them and how this would be achieved.

4.1.4 Summary of theme "The impact of notions of hierarchy"

This theme explored often negative perspectives of the SLT's use of their power. The hierarchical position of school staff role impacted on the project and limited the ability of some staff to contribute in the team; this was a barrier. The role of the project leader (non-SLT and non-teaching staff) and SLT presence in the team were noted to be facilitators in relation to preventing team members from personalising[1] project activities; this is specific to carrying out a project focusing on staff wellbeing. The perspectives of leadership also impacted on expectations of where responsibility for wellbeing and change lay. The next theme identifies queries raised about the anonymity of the project questionnaire.

4.1.5 Relationship of the theme's key findings to the research questions

Research question one (RQ1)[2] and RQ5[3]: The role of the project leader (non-SLT and non-teaching staff) and the presence of a member of SLT staff minimised the risk of staff personalising project activities and were facilitators.

RQ2[4]: The impact of school staff role on the ability to contribute to the team and issues of where responsibility for wellbeing and change lay acted as barriers.

---

[1] Directing project activities to address their own individual needs.

[2] RQ1 – What facilitates the activities associated with the early stages of a staff wellbeing project being carried out in a secondary school from the perspective of school staff?

[3] RQ5 – What are the features of the process of change associated with a staff wellbeing project in a secondary school that are specific to the staff wellbeing focus of the project?

[4] RQ2 – What acts as barriers to the activities associated with the early stages of a staff wellbeing project being carried out in a secondary school from the perspective of school staff?

4.2 THEME: IS IT REALLY ANONYMOUS?

This theme outlines wider staff concern as to whether their contribution to the project questionnaire would be handled anonymously, as highlighted by five participants. This querying of anonymity is specific to the project focus: the collection of personal staff data.

Figure 3: Graphic representation of the theme "Is it really anonymous?"

> *"There's always that kind of thing in the back of people's heads… 'who else is going to see this? What are my views going to raise?'... probably more … negativity than positivity." (Teacher)*

This suggests a questioning of whether staff trusted in the acclaimed anonymity and the staff who would have access to the data, fearing a risk of negative impact if anonymity were breached. Whilst it is not specified as to who it is that staff may be concerned about seeing the data, findings about staff being concerned about being watched by SLT staff (outlined in the subtheme "Perspectives of a powerful leadership team") may be relevant. Fears as to how this may impact were explored:

> *"My only concern is, how many people will actually complete the online survey[1]. There is a feeling that, even though it is anonymous and confidential, that people can still see who it is." (Non-teaching staff)*

[1] In interviews, participants used the terms "questionnaire" and "survey" interchangeably to refer to the same instrument: the questionnaire being implemented in the school by the project team.

A low response rate had the potential to block the progress of the project and it was, therefore, important to project team members to minimise the risk of this. The approach taken was reflected on:

> *"[The project leader] made it very clear exactly how the process worked… and what she was going to do with the information… So it was transparent. Very important." (Teacher)*

Participants felt the response rate to the questionnaire was a success (as outlined in the next subtheme "Being communicative"), suggesting their approach was effective. I asked whether the concerns regarding anonymity were specific to the school at the centre of this study and was told:

> *"I've worked at quite a few other schools… I think our pressure to be outstanding… does ripple through the other things that we do sometimes… In other schools... I'm not sure whether it would cause that much pressure if you just went, 'Can I have some data?'" (Teacher)*

This quote highlights a cultural expectation for staff to be "outstanding" and suggests the school's cultural context may have influenced the level of concern regarding anonymity. The findings in this theme are specific to collecting personal data about staff.

4.2.1 Summary of theme "Is it really anonymous?"

In response to plans to collect personal staff data, there were felt to be wider staff concerns as to who may be able to view the data and what impact that may have. This was believed to be heightened due to the cultural school expectation on staff to be "outstanding". The next theme outlines the importance of communication.

4.2.2 RELATIONSHIP OF THE THEME'S KEY FINDINGS TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RQ5[1]: Implementing a new practice of collecting personal staff data raised concerns as to who may be able to view the data and it was necessary to dispel such fears. Their process was responsive to this need.

[1] RQ5 – What are the features of the process of change associated with a staff wellbeing project in a secondary school that are specific to the staff wellbeing focus of the project?

4.3 THEME: THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION

This theme reflects that participants felt communication was important. Within this theme are the following subthemes:

- **Being communicative**
- **Getting the message right**
- **Failure of communication**

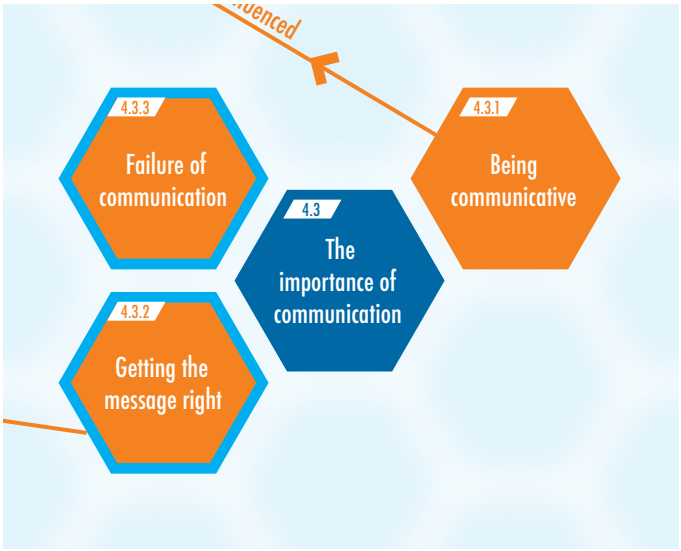

Figure 4: Graphic representation of the theme "The importance of communication"

4.3.1 SUBTHEME: BEING COMMUNICATIVE

Being communicative within the team and when publicising the questionnaire to the wider staff team was felt to be a facilitator. Three members of the team highlighted the communicative nature of the team, as illustrated here:

> *"I think the communication has helped to drive us to where we've got to … yourself: very communicative. And most of the team are as well." (SLT staff)*

Here follows the project leader highlighting how maintaining communication with a colleague, regarding a delegated task, enabled progress:

> *"Interviewer: What do you think helped that to be slick?*

Participant: Just the communication, really, just making sure [the team member] was happy to do that, checking in to make sure it was getting done when it should have been done." (Non-teaching staff)

Communications within the team were, therefore, felt to be plentiful and a facilitator. The project leader also recognised the importance of delivering a PR campaign to elicit participation in the questionnaire:

"If it's just launched … 'here you go, spend 10 or 15 minutes filling this out', I think the responses will be minimal. I think there needs to be some sort of PR around it." (Non-teaching staff)

Persistence and multimedia approaches were used and this was noted as a facilitator:

"A variation of email, desk drop, updates in… morning meetings. And then when the survey had launched, reminding people when it was closing.... So that was one of the successes… a lot of people have said that, out of all the surveys that have been run on the intranet… that's been the biggest response." (Non-teaching staff)

These multimedia communications enabled staff who may miss one channel of communication to still receive the message and provided reminders to those who access multiple channels of communication.

4.3.1.1 Summary of subtheme "Being communicative"

The quantity of communication within the team was felt to be effective, as was the multimedia promotion of the questionnaire to the wider staff team. This resulted in the online questionnaire having the largest staff response ever experienced in the school.

4.3.2 SUBTHEME: GETTING THE MESSAGE RIGHT

Three participants highlighted the importance of getting the message right when communicating with the wider staff, as illustrated here:

"We don't want to say something that they're suddenly going to expect, well we're now responsible for staff morale. 'Well no, you're responsible for your own morale'… So I

think we need to be careful about the messages, and how we communicate what." (SLT staff)

This relates to the subtheme "Whose responsibility is it?" The above participant indicated that the way activities of the project team are communicated could impact on the expectation regarding responsibility and implies that careful use of language could steer where responsibility may reside. The same participant felt communications would need to be carried out with care in instances where requests from the wider staff may be difficult to address:

"If everyone talks about pay… you can't solve that… and the messages we'd have to put out about that mustn't be defensive. And so … I think we're going to have to tread carefully." (SLT staff)

This participant felt it important to carefully manage communications so as to not negatively impact relations. The importance placed on not being defensive indicates the need to be considered and professional in communications. This perspective may have been heightened due to this participant being one of the SLT participants and having an awareness of how their role and unhelpful messages may interact (relating to issues highlighted in the theme "The impact of notions of hierarchy"). Delivering the right message regarding the first set of findings[1] from the team's questionnaire is illustrated here:

"I don't necessarily agree that everyone needs to know the statistics of how everyone's feeling … we complain about statistics with the kids, that doesn't aid progress with the kids, so why should it aid progress with us?" (Teacher)

Considering communicating the statistics and the impact of this was more focused on doing so to the SLT, compared with the previous findings that focused on communicating this information with the wider staff team. The focus here regarding communicating how staff were feeling specifically relates to having collected data on staff wellbeing.

[1] The first set of questionnaire findings were incorrect as a result of errors in the analysis process and presented a negative view of school and leadership practices.

4.3.2.1 Summary of subtheme "Getting the message right"

Getting the message right was relevant both for communicating with the wider staff team and the SLT to positively impact on relations and expectations. The delicacy of communicating findings on staff wellbeing is specific to the staff wellbeing focus of the project.

4.3.3 SUBTHEME: FAILURE OF COMMUNICATION

There was data indicating failures of communication (an absence of communication or communications not heard), which in turn highlighted the importance of communication. Early on in the project one team member highlighted to me concerns regarding the lack of communication with the wider staff:

> *"We've made the decision to do the questionnaire; does the whole school want us to do the questionnaire? That's staff... involvement, that's staff wellbeing… So, yeah, maybe more sharing of information." (SLT staff)*

This participant makes the case for communication with the wider staff body to enable their involvement and that this is of specific importance due to the staff wellbeing focus.

There was a view that the failures to communicate with the wider staff negatively impacted on them, as illustrated here:

> *"And because they've then not heard anything of impact or results, they're just quite... apathetic towards it, really." (Teacher)*

Hence, there was an emotional impact associated with failures to communicate.

Failures in communication were not purely about an absence of communication. There was some issue with communications not being heard, illustrated here:

> *"People say 'Oh well, you never told us'… and you just think… 'I've said it several times'… Things are delivered through emails… Who's that from? Delete… And staff meetings… people sit in there playing on their phone, or whatever, so they miss a message that someone's said." (SLT staff)*

Whilst perspectives varied as to how forgiving of staff the participants were regarding staff not receiving communications, there were clear difficulties in ensuring messages were heard. This issue of staff not receiving communications also happened in relation to communications about the questionnaire. Despite the overarching sense of success of the questionnaire PR (as outlined earlier in the subtheme "Being communicative"), it was noted that not all staff were reached. Therefore, the wider issue of staff not having capacity to pick up or hear all communications creates a barrier to the engagement of staff. Despite the multimedia approach and repetition of communicating with staff (as outlined in the subtheme "Being communicative") it seems more communication, in excess of what was felt to be necessary by the team, may be required.

4.3.3.1 Summary of subtheme "Failure of communication"

In this subtheme, issues of not communicating with the wider staff and communications not being heard were a barrier and highlighted the importance of sufficient communication.

4.3.4 Summary of theme "The importance of communication"

Participants felt communication was important. The project team's experience featured facilitators ("Being communicative") and barriers ("Failure of communication") and participants had aims of "Getting the message right" when communicating with non-project team staff, including the communication of staff wellbeing data. The next theme presented is "Allocating resources".

4.3.5 Relationship of the theme's key findings to the research questions

RQ1[1]: Being communicative was felt to be a facilitator.

RQ2[2]: Failures of communication were indicated to be barriers.

RQ5[1]: The delicacy of communicating findings on staff wellbeing is specific to the process associated with implementing staff wellbeing research.

[1] RQ1 – What facilitates the activities associated with the early stages of a staff wellbeing project being carried out in a secondary school from the perspective of school staff?

[2] RQ2 – What acts as barriers to the activities associated with the early stages of a staff wellbeing project being carried out in a secondary school from the perspective of school staff?

4.4 Theme: Allocating resources

Participants highlighted resources that were and were not allocated to the project, or indicated gaps that highlighted the need for resources. This theme is divided into the following subthemes:

- **No allocated time.** This subtheme contains the subsections: No allocated time for the team to meet; No allocated time for the project leader.
- **The need for specific support.** This subtheme contains the subsections: The need for support from senior leadership staff; The need for support to carry out research; Educational Psychologist support.
- **The need for a representative team.**

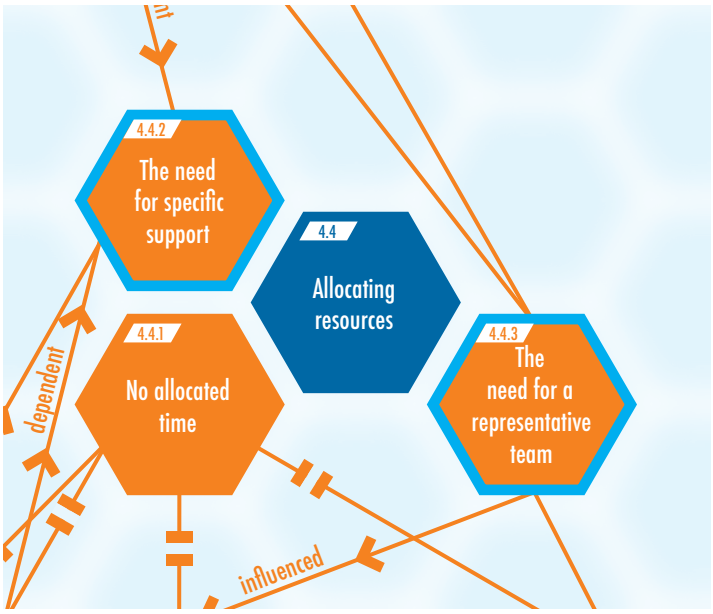

Figure 5: Graphic representation of the theme "Allocating resources"

4.4.1 Subtheme: No allocated time

Time, as a resource, was not provided. It was expected that project team members would carry out project activities in addition to their typical workload. This impacted on the team's ability to meet as well as impacted on the project leader. All but two participants raised

[1] RQ5 – What are the features of the process of change associated with a staff wellbeing project in a secondary school that are specific to the staff wellbeing focus of the project?

issues relating to a lack of allocated time. This subtheme is divided into the following sections:

- **No allocated time for the team to meet**
- **No allocated time for the project leader**

4.4.1.1 No allocated time for the team to meet

The lack of time afforded to the project and an absence of the project being given priority meant attendance at meetings was inconsistent. For the project leader, this created conflict between the need to make decisions and making decisions with limited attendance at meetings:

> *"I was always conscious of making decisions, because we never had everybody there." (Non-teaching staff)*

Decisions made when there was low attendance risked plans being made without team consensus, creating a barrier to progressing the project in a representative way. The importance of the project team being representative is outlined in the forthcoming subtheme "The need for a representative team".

Two team members raised other ways that a lack of allocated time to meet impacted, as illustrated here:

> *"I think we're going to struggle to get everyone round at the same time. And that… might lead to a little bit more of a fractured group feel… I couldn't make that initial meeting, so I am a bit behind the process now" (SLT staff)*

Risk of a lack of connection with both the team and the process was raised, creating a barrier to cohesivity.

A range of ideas were shared regarding attempting to bring the team together, including scheduling meetings when carrying out school timetabling and considering less conventional times to meet, such as breakfast meetings and inset days. Four team members felt some allocated and protected time was needed:

"I guess the only thing would be, like an allocated time slot… which is protected... But obviously the logistics of then organising that... I don't know if it's feasible." (Teacher)

Both non-SLT and SLT staff indicated doubt regarding the ability to provide protected time to meet. Whilst logistically it would be difficult to bring the whole team together, schools do manage to bring large groups of staff together (for example, staff meetings). Even at a project meeting on an inset day, which was acclaimed to have been a better time to bring staff together, not all team members attended:

"I even sent a note out to heads of department saying, 'I need these people for this', and a lot of them … said 'no, because we need to do this with them'." (Non-teaching staff)

This indicates that other school business was deemed more important than the project at the centre of this study and that this was a barrier. This comment, provided by the project leader, demonstrates her lack of influence and that the project had not been prioritised by the SLT. The lack of power of the project leader could relate to her hierarchical position, as outlined in the subtheme "The influence of school staff roles on the project" and her need for SLT staff support is highlighted in the next subtheme "The need for specific support".

4.4.1.2 No allocated time for the project leader

Additional to the need for time for team members to meet, the project leader needed time to carry out project activities. Having taken on the role in addition to her school role and run the project for 8 months, the project leader felt unable to continue without being allocated dedicated project time:

"If … they want to continue it… it needs to be done in such a way that you are given that time to do it. And that's not 30 minutes here or … there, it's a proper 'this is your job'." (Non-teaching staff)

Formalising the role and time to carry out the role was, therefore, necessary.

The following interaction with the project leader suggested to me she felt defeated:

"Interviewer: Do you envisage that... you're going to look at whether there's anything that needs actioning?

*Participant: *sigh* … Again, it goes back to that … time constraint. I've realised that I can't do things if I haven't got the time to do it. My brain doesn't work like that." (Non-teaching staff)*

This impact on the functioning and resilience of the project leader was a barrier and shows the unsustainability of a project where allocated time is not provided.

Participants did not link the project topic (staff wellbeing) to the issue of not having allocated time; this issue could apply to any change project. However, there is conflict between this issue and the subtheme "The need to persist" (outlined later in this chapter). In "The need to persist", a link is drawn between the importance of staff wellbeing and the need to persist with the project. The lack of allocated time for the project leader presented as a barrier to the continuation of the project, placing the lack of allocated time in conflict with the importance of persisting.

4.4.1.3 Summary of subtheme "No allocated time"

The lack of allocated time, both for the team and the project leader, acted as a barrier. The lack of time for the project leader was significant enough to halt the continuation of the project.

4.4.2 SUBTHEME: THE NEED FOR SPECIFIC SUPPORT

Participants indicated to me areas where specific support was needed, or highlighted issues that indicated to me that certain types of support were required. This subtheme is divided into the following sections:

- **The need for support from senior leadership staff.**
- **The need for support to carry out research.** This includes the subsections: Support with designing the research; Support with analysing the data.
- **Educational Psychologist support.**

4.4.2.1 The need for support from senior leadership staff

The project leader, as a non-SLT member of staff, experienced an absence of support from SLT staff:

> *"I had no direction from above… there was no link [with SLT staff]." (Non-teaching staff)*

This absence of support and dialogue between the project leader and SLT staff left the team isolated and was a barrier. There was SLT representation on the team, but as SLT staff were limiting their participation (outlined in the subtheme "The influence of school staff roles on the project"), direction from them was limited. As a result, the project leader suggested a mechanism that would specifically address the need for allocated SLT staff support:

> *"Every... two weeks, every month, [the project leader] meets with … one senior leader, and discusses progress of how the group are doing." (Non-teaching staff)*

The project leader here indicates a desire for a commitment to regular support. The required support from the SLT was not directly specific to the project focus of staff wellbeing; any non-SLT member of staff who were to lead a change project may benefit from SLT staff support. However, the value placed on the project leader being a member of non-SLT staff seemed to be important due to the staff wellbeing focus of the project (outlined in the subtheme "The influence of school staff roles on the project"), resulting in the need for SLT staff support.

4.4.2.2 The need for support to carry out research

There was a lot of data focusing on the challenges experienced in carrying out research[1], indicating the need for support with this. This section is subdivided as follows:

- **Support with designing the research**
- **Support with analysing the data**

[1] The research consisted of the project team collecting staff data on school practices relating to staff wellbeing.

4.4.2.2.1 Support with designing the research

Concerns regarding the design of the questionnaire were raised. There were different perspectives as to what the questionnaire should be trying to achieve:

> *"Another member of the group [wanted to collect views on] LT… and vision, and ethos, and work environment… that's manipulating a questionnaire to 'what is the cause of your wellbeing?' not, 'how is your wellbeing?'... it's stating that their own personal opinion of what they believe and perceive to be issues out there, they want on the questionnaire, to find out if anyone else feels the same. Wrong." (SLT staff)*

This view was never raised with the team[1]. The risk of staff steering the project towards their own personal needs is likely to be particularly relevant to the project studied due to the personal nature of the staff wellbeing focus. This is an area where allocated support would be appropriate to help staff to determine the focus of their research. The above concerns provided drive for this member of staff to want a representative team, to ensure that the process of designing the research was done from a representative position. Focus on forming a representative team is outlined in the forthcoming subtheme "The need for a representative team".

Some participants presented ideas of ways they would do things differently. Three participants highlighted the need to survey about practices that could be changed:

> *"So the things that you can change in the school, that's what you make the questions about. Because some of them were so broad, they were about things that we can't really change. And so that can then increase frustration." (Teacher)*

This participant highlighted the risk to the emotional wellbeing of staff where practices of concern cannot be changed. The frustration caused could impact on trust, with staff having an expectation of their views being responded to when this is not actually possible.

Some of the qualitative data collected contained views that the team felt uncomfortable about sharing with the SLT. In response to this, one team member highlighted a question that would facilitate more constructive data:

[1] The quoted participant did not attend subsequent meetings – attendance issues are highlighted in the subtheme "No allocated time". Consensus of those in attendance at the following meeting enabled the focus on potential causal factors to remain.

"'What could we do to help?' probably would have been more guided… and, therefore, LT could take that and apply that to our systems going forward." (Teacher)

This solutions-focused approach presents as a plausible way to collect more constructive data. Support to facilitate consideration of a positive focus could be of value.

Arguably, doctoral level trained EPs could be well placed to support schools to design research.

4.4.2.2.2 Support with analysing the data

When the project team analysed their data, errors were made[1], highlighting the need for allocated support for carrying out data analysis:

"For some of the answers, let's say a 1 meant good, and other answers a 1 meant poor. And … it had been taken that 1 had meant the same thing throughout." (SLT staff)

Two participants indicated that they could not understand how the other team members did not notice this, as illustrated here:

"My slight annoyance with that is that we had a senior leader in the room that didn't once highlight or query the fact that these figures were not right." (Non-teaching staff)

SLT staff limiting their input was purposeful (outlined in the subtheme "The influence of school staff roles on the project"), creating a barrier where SLT input in the analysis may have been beneficial. In a context where SLT staff feel the need to limit their involvement, there is potentially a greater need for support with carrying out research.

Additionally, four team members told me how they were fearful of maths, statistics, Excel[2], numbers or data; a proportion of the team lacked confidence in their ability to analyse data:

[1] Specifically in the analysis of Likert scale data.

[2] The team used Excel to collate the data.

> *"I'm an art teacher, and I've got nothing to do with statistics, and the whole thing scares me, so that's why I was hoping to be the typer." (Teacher)*

With some of the team feeling unable to contribute to the analysis, any sense of reliance on the analysis capability of the team as a whole was undermined. In instances where such fears exist, there is a case for the need for support.

Three team members shared a range of ways they felt the situation impacted. The emotional impact on individuals is illustrated here:

> *"I think [the project leader's] confidence has been knocked as a result of this." (SLT staff)*

The following analogy highlights the resulting halt in progress and indicates a desire to complete the project process:

> *"If you have opened the can of worms, you need to be able to then start sorting that out. You can't just open the can of worms and walk away, then just expect everyone to be happy… Because you've left a mess… There are worms everywhere... and then it just causes… a little bit more resentment and frustration.*" *(Teacher)*

The halt in progress, resulting in not seeing the process through (namely, not responding to the findings), was felt to risk the triggering of more negative emotions – "resentment and frustration".

The range of impacts (namely, on emotions, perspectives of the team and further project progress) observed, in relation to the errors made, demonstrates the barriers experienced and the potential value of having sufficient support.

The analysis issues were specific to carrying out research, but were not specific to the staff wellbeing focus of the project and could be relevant to collecting other school community views.

4.4.2.3 Educational Psychologist support

Some data indicated a need for EP support. One participant stated that she was looking to me, in my role as trainee EP, for expertise:

> *"I haven't reached the stage where I have any private knowledge of staff wellbeing initiatives that have been rolled out within other school environments… we… need your guidance and expertise." (SLT staff)*

This quoted participant views the EP as a resource for addressing a gap relating to developing new practices in which school staff lack experience.

The same participant was also concerned about managing difficulties without EP support:

> *"When you're looking at something that could have quite controversial results… it could be exceptionally damaging to, not only us as a business … of absolutely dividing staff morale… and destroying it... and it's the end of your research programme, and what do we do then?" (SLT staff)*

Continued EP support is desired to mitigate risk at times of difficulty. Whilst somewhat unspecified, it seems likely that the risk to "staff morale" due to controversial results relates to the staff wellbeing focus of the project, although may not be exclusive to this topic area. In terms of managing difficulties, the following suggests an ideal response to the errors made in the analysis (outlined in the previous section):

> *"We get feedback, we move on. That's what we tell the kids all the time. We're just not as good at it ourselves. But I think we should be." (Teacher)*

This resilient response was not achieved and it could be appropriate for EP support to include focus on the development of team resilience for responding to difficulties.

Early in the project, concern for the drive of the project without EP support was expressed:

> *"I think the biggest concern I've got is the longevity of it… somebody needs to kind of drive that once you go". (Non-teaching staff)*

Furthermore, the project leader drew on my research timescales to forge her own schedule:

"Easter was the point, wasn't it… To me it was irrelevant that the survey had come out in December. Easter would have been 'right, these are the findings. You can now close your part and walk away'. (Non-teaching staff)

The above quotes indicate that the EP role was deemed a facilitator in providing drive and my research programme unwittingly provided timescales, which the EP could also offer. With the need for support at difficult times and access to knowledge beyond what is known by school staff, a case for the value of EP support has been made.

4.4.2.4 Summary of subtheme "The need for specific support"

In this subtheme, "The need for specific support", it has been identified that there were gaps in respect of support. Specifically, the non-SLT project leader needed support from SLT staff and the team needed research support for the designing of their research and analysing their data and findings. This points to the value of having EP support. The need for support to conduct research included relevance of the staff wellbeing focus of the project, to help prevent project team staff from steering the research focus to address their own personal needs.

4.4.3 SUBTHEME: THE NEED FOR A REPRESENTATIVE TEAM

Importance was placed on the project team (as a resource) being representative of the wider staff body. Prior to becoming more representative, there was concern regarding how a non-representative team may influence the project:

"I'm very concerned that that has support staff, no one teacher, no middle leaders and I don't think is a representative group. Which really massively concerns me, on how does that influence a research project?… from the point of view of designing the questionnaire, and the results that it will provide us" (SLT staff)

Underlying this seems to be a value of inclusion, with a potentially non-representative questionnaire perhaps not serving the role diversity of the staff team. This seems to be particularly relevant due to the staff focus of the project. This was also deemed important in relation to the implementation of further practices[1]:

[1] In response to the questionnaire findings.

> *"We will try and implement things that we think is right, but it might not necessarily be the right thing for that department… because we haven't got the correct representation." (Non-teaching staff)*

Thus, a non-representative team was felt to be a barrier. Partway through the research period, a new team was formed, which was largely deemed to be a success in being representative:

> *"Having people from different departments there, as well as different management levels… because it allows you then to have a perspective across the whole school." (Teacher)*

Value was placed on the team being representative, with the team, as a resource, now seen as a facilitator.

Despite the evolved team being a better fit for the project, it was not without some critique:

> *"It's quite teacher-heavy, which is fine, because the school is teacher-heavy. But obviously it wasn't just teachers who did the survey." (Non-teaching staff)*

This could suggest that this member of non-teaching staff felt that her voice was not dominant enough to fairly represent her sector of school staff and demonstrates that achieving a representative team may not be as straightforward as membership being proportional of staff groups. The timing of establishing the representative group was also considered:

> *"It would have been better to have started with the all-encompassing group, rather than the leadership group. I just think that seems to then get … more... buy-in from staff." (SLT staff)*

The above quote implies that the leadership-heavy start to the project was a barrier to staff "buy-in" and links to the subtheme "Perspectives of a powerful leadership team".

4.4.3.1 Summary of subtheme "The need for a representative team"

In this subtheme, the importance of the project team being representative of the wider staff body is highlighted, to enable project activities to serve the diversity of the whole staff team, which seems to be specific to the staff focus of the project.

4.4.4 Summary of theme "Allocating resources"

In this theme, the resources that were needed were identified: allocated time; specific support; and a representative team. The lack of allocated time was significant enough to halt the continuation of the project. The next theme outlines components that supported forward movement.

4.4.5 Relationship of the theme's key findings to the research questions

RQ1[1] and RQ5[2]: The staff focus of the project meant it was important the project team was representative of the wider staff. The representative team that was formed was, therefore, a facilitator.

RQ2[3]: Not having allocated time was a barrier. Gaps in support also created barriers.

RQ4[4]: EPs can: provide knowledge, drive and timeframes; support resilience; and mitigate risk.

[1] RQ1 – What facilitates the activities associated with the early stages of a staff wellbeing project being carried out in a secondary school from the perspective of school staff?

[2] RQ5 – What are the features of the process of change associated with a staff wellbeing project in a secondary school that are specific to the staff wellbeing focus of the project?

[3] RQ2 – What acts as barriers to the activities associated with the early stages of a staff wellbeing project being carried out in a secondary school from the perspective of school staff?

[4] RQ4 – What is the role of the EP in supporting systemic change in the context of a secondary school carrying out a staff wellbeing project?

4.5 Theme: Achieving forward movement

This theme contains factors that participants indicated related to achieving forward movement. This theme is divided into the following subthemes:

- **Goals and visions.** This subtheme contains the subsection: Investment.
- **Issues of pace.**
- **The need to persist.**

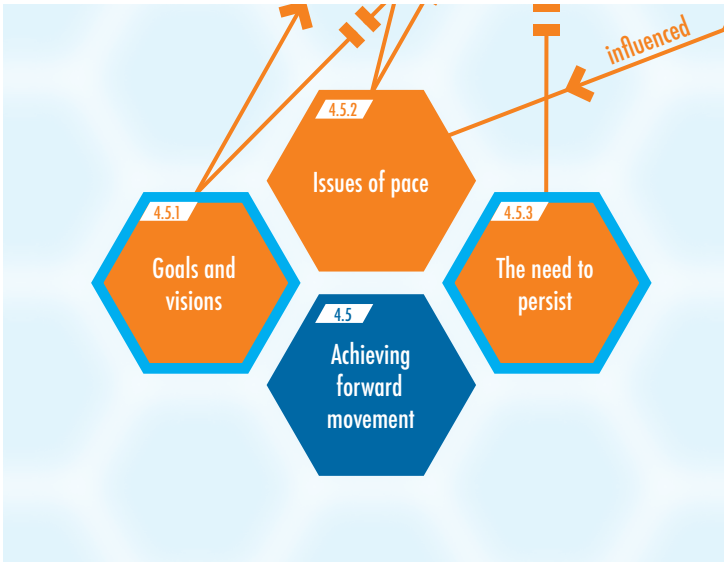

Figure 6: Graphic representation of the theme "Achieving forward movement"

4.5.1 Subtheme: Goals and visions

There were two main areas of goals and visions, to: support staff wellbeing; and take an evidence-based approach. Investment and forward movement was derived from these aims and is covered in the forthcoming subsection:

- **Investment**

There was SLT and non-SLT vision of supporting staff wellbeing, illustrated here:

> *"I've experienced poor wellbeing whilst being here, so you … think if you can then help other people long term, then you can see the bigger picture, and anyone can benefit." (Teacher)*

As participation in the project team was voluntary, the vision for improved staff wellbeing may have been an existing and unrealised idea held by participants. Behind the desire to achieve staff wellbeing, on the part of one participant, was a view that wellbeing would benefit performance:

> *"A happy workforce is an efficient workforce and will do the job better... So… you want people to be happy… if it is within our power to change things, then we should be able to do that." (SLT staff)*

There was also an early-established goal to take an evidence-based approach:

> *"I also prefer the fact that we're grounding it in evidential statements from questionnaires, so it's not opinions around an unrepresentative group." (SLT staff)*

After the initial focus on establishing that an evidence-based approach would be taken, this was never spoken of again in the team, but it was an agreed undercurrent providing a format to follow. This format can be seen here, accompanied by a vision that the wellbeing project would continue long-term:

> *"The initial survey goes out, we get a load of feedback… that … is the catalyst for the first… 'Right, this is what we need to do this year' … you then send the survey out again in a year's time... once that's embedded, after a year or two, that will be business as normal." (Non-teaching staff)*

The goals and visions[1] were facilitators enabling forward movement. Exceptions to this were where barriers, experienced at times of difficulty (outlined in "Support with analysing data" and "No allocated time for the project leader"), blocked progress. Goals and visions alone were not sufficient to sustain forward movement at such times. Having goals and visions to follow is not specific to the project topic of staff wellbeing.

[1] Which were complimentary of each other

4.5.1.1 Investment

Seemingly the visions resulted in investment in the project:

> *"[He] is extremely keen... The things he sent through … the motivation is there... I think that is important" (SLT staff)*

The reference to information sent demonstrates forward movement as a result of investment in the project and resulting motivation. There was some, but not full, SLT investment:

> *"The key enabler is that you've got [the Headteacher's] buy-in… Equally… within the leadership team, you've got some people who are quite on board with it… probably one of the barriers is that you've got some very sceptical people on the leadership team, around it and around the process. So that may have slowed things up." (SLT staff)*

The headteacher's investment was felt to be a facilitator. The lack of widespread SLT support may have been a barrier.

I asked a participant what facilitated wider staff engagement in the questionnaire. She replied:

> *"Staff thought that '…this is about us… and how we are feeling'… I think it's the first time we've actually had to… do something that's about us". (Teacher)*

The questionnaire was the first to be specifically about staff need supported investment.

4.5.1.2 Summary of subtheme "Goals and visions"

In this subtheme, the aims of increased staff wellbeing and an evidence-based approach provided focus. Staff were invested in achieving the aims, which acted as a forward driver. The investment was supported by this being the first questionnaire in the school to focus on staff need.

4.5.2 SUBTHEME: ISSUES OF PACE

There were polar positions: that of feeling the pace was too slow, preventing forward movement; and that of feeling the pace was too fast, preventing reflection. One participant said that the pace was too slow, raising feelings of reduced connection with the project, which was highlighted as a barrier:

> *"So I probably feel slightly, a bit more disenfranchised from the project ... Just because I'm feeling that it's slow." (SLT staff)*

This discord indicates that this participant needed to see quick outcomes to support engagement.

Later, another team member highlighted her experience of a fast pace:

> *"Last day of term… last hour of the day, we were looking at the results for the first time, we were inputting figures into a spread sheet that was wrong, but we didn't know it was wrong, we came back… ready to present to SLT on the Tuesday. Where's the time to review?... And that put me in a very difficult position." (Non-teaching staff)*

A lack of space to reflect is highlighted. This may have contributed to the team not noticing the errors made in the analysis.

The inclination for a fast pace to be taken was not specific to the project; there was a wider school cultural expectation for projects to move fast:

> *"It's … like 'Right, let's make a decision', form a committee… 'Right… let's get going'... Because we run to term times, you know… that you've got six weeks… to get something up and running… strategic-wise, which this is, I suppose… I would say that we look quite far into the distance, but by the time we get down to committee level, that's when decisions have been made to do something." (SLT staff)*

This suggests that as a "committee" had been formed, a fast pace was expected. However, early in the process, the team were dealing with strategic aspects (for example what to measure), which took time. The school's typical way of working entails the SLT making the strategic decisions prior to forming a team. These aspects occurring the opposite way

around resulted in the team not being able to commence at a fast pace. Yet this order of events was necessary for this staff wellbeing project so as to gain "buy-in" from the wider staff team (outlined previously in the subtheme "The need for a representative team").

Further reasoning was given as to why a slower pace was required:

> *"We're doing this in-house, we're not paying a company ... If we were, then a) it would be more professional and b) it would be ready… within … a couple of weeks. So…we have to take a slightly longer approach" (Non-teaching staff)*

This relates to the subtheme "The need for specific support" and highlights that in the absence of sufficient support and experience, a slower pace is needed.

The impact of the issue of the pace being too fast was presented:

> *"When you start putting… really short dates on things… that puts me into almost like shut-down mode." (Non-teaching staff)*

The above comment indicates that a fast pace creates a barrier to functioning and forward movement. Indeed it was felt that a slower pace would still enable forward movement:

> *"It needs to be done at a slower pace … And that doesn't mean that things aren't happening." (Non-teaching staff)*

This comment highlights the need for trust that forward movement will still be achieved. It was also highlighted that if there were allocated time (outlined in the subtheme "No allocated time"), a faster pace could be achieved.

4.5.2.1 Summary of subtheme "Issues of pace"

There are a number of barriers identified in this subtheme. The need for a different pace was a barrier, creating negative feeling. It was felt trust was needed that forward movement would happen when working to a slower pace. The issue of pace was largely not specific to the subject matter of the team working on staff wellbeing, although the need for a different (and slower) approach, in terms of when the committee was formed, did relate to the need for staff "buy-in" due to the staff wellbeing focus.

4.5.3 SUBTHEME: THE NEED TO PERSIST

A need to persist,, therefore, achieving forward movement, was raised by some participants and was given weight due to the importance of staff wellbeing. Two participants voiced that a concerted effort should be made, requiring persistence:

> *"Most people who were involved would say you've got to try it at least... just a few meetings, that's not trying it properly."*

Another reason was given for persisting:

> *"We have to be persistent with it.... Otherwise… it just looks like another fad… and teaching's full of fads. Our own personal wellbeing, as a staff body, should not be degraded to that." (Teacher)*

The importance of the staff wellbeing focus of the project is stated as the reason for persistence being important. Whilst persistence would be necessary in any change initiative to sustain change efforts, this suggests that a staff wellbeing project is deemed to have higher value than some other change initiatives.

The importance of seeing the project process through is again expressed here:

> *"At least there is an acknowledgement in the wider school body that something has come from the group… at least there's the action … And that the mandate of trying to look at staff wellbeing, and then to sort of work with that, is being fulfilled." (SLT staff)*

The above quoted participant highlights the importance of persistence for the wider staff body and indicates the role of action in this. Whilst action presents as a facilitator, this needs balancing against the need for reflection outlined in the previous subtheme.

4.5.3.1 Summary of subtheme "The need to persist"

In this subtheme, participants highlighted the value of persisting, particularly due to the staff wellbeing focus. Persisting results in forward movement.

4.5.4 SUMMARY OF THEME "ACHIEVING FORWARD MOVEMENT"

"Goals and visions" provided focus and this, coupled with "Investment", facilitated forward movement. "Issues of pace" created discomfort and were barriers. Trust that a slower pace would not prevent forward movement was required. "The need to persist" facilitated forward movement and this was important due to the topic of staff wellbeing. The next theme highlights a sense of participants being out of control of the process.

4.5.5 RELATIONSHIP OF THE THEME'S KEY FINDINGS TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RQ1[1]: Goals, visions and investment in the project facilitated forward movement.

RQ1 & RQ5[2]: Persistence also facilitated forward movement and was particularly important due to the topic of staff wellbeing.

RQ2[3]: Issues of pace (either too fast or too slow) were felt to be barriers.

RQ3[4]: Discomfort was experienced in relation to pace.

RQ5: The staff wellbeing focus gave weight to the project, supporting wider staff investment and providing a reason to persist.

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[1] RQ1 – What facilitates the activities associated with the early stages of a staff wellbeing project being carried out in a secondary school from the perspective of school staff?

[2] RQ5 – What are the features of the process of change associated with a staff wellbeing project in a secondary school that are specific to the staff wellbeing focus of the project?

[3] RQ2 – What acts as barriers to the activities associated with the early stages of a staff wellbeing project being carried out in a secondary school from the perspective of school staff?

[4] RQ3 – In the context of a secondary school carrying out a staff wellbeing project, how does the process impact on staff and project outcomes?

4.6 THEME: OUT OF CONTROL

This theme reflects participants seemingly feeling out of control and attempts at overcoming this. This theme contains the following subthemes:

- **Do not know what we are doing**
- **Structures**

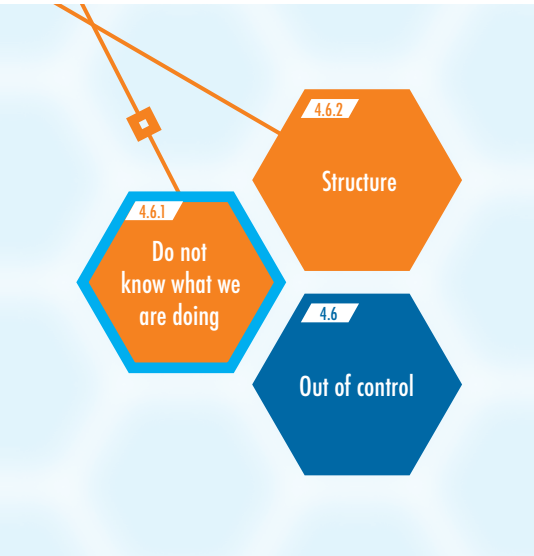

Figure 7: Graphic representation of the theme "Out of control"

4.6.1 SUBTHEME: DO NOT KNOW WHAT WE ARE DOING

Participants did not always know what they were doing, suggesting a feeling of being out of control. Early on, there were unknown aspects:

> *"I don't know if it's the blind leading the blind … Because the focus of our focus group is a bit blurry." (Non-teaching staff)*

Another participant indicated associated discomfort:

> *"Some people need to see a process… rather than… something that's open-ended… evolving, and with maybe more softer subject matter. And that's possibly where people have got a little bit of uncomfortableness." (SLT staff)*

The lack of a tangible subject and process impacted the ability to be in control, proving difficult for some. Discomfort relating to the "softer subject matter" is specific to the staff wellbeing focus.

Some participants found it difficult to understand some meeting content:

> *"There was one point in the meeting … I was thinking 'I have no idea really what anybody's talking about'" (Non-teaching staff)*

The lack of inclusivity of meeting content was a barrier to engagement. This conflicted with the importance of having a representative team (outlined in the subtheme "The need for a representative team").

4.6.1.1 Summary of subtheme "Do not know what we are doing"

There were participant experiences of not knowing what they were doing and having a lack of control of the process and the subject matter of staff wellbeing.

4.6.2 SUBTHEME: STRUCTURES

In the context of individuals and the team not knowing what they were doing (outlined in the previous subtheme), staff wanted structures. There were two areas of structure that team members attempted to put in place: structures for meetings and timelines. Meeting structures were referred to the most, including minute taking:

> *"To keep a track of what was said in the last [meeting], because I've had 500 million since then, to be able to go back and refresh yourself for 30 seconds before you walk in the room is essential." (SLT staff)*

It was felt minutes would enable a sense of control in the context of managing other school demands. The need for an agenda was also voiced. The above and following comments show how some participants looked to structures, such as minutes, to provide a framework to facilitate project activities:

> *"I don't think I've seen the minutes from last meeting... So if I had action points on that, they're not done." (Non-teaching staff)*

The absence of a structure for access to minutes was hence felt to be a barrier to accountability and progress, resulting in a lack of control of the process.

Timeline structures were also referred to:

> *"September through to October we build the survey… November we start doing some promo, December we launch it, January it closes… But, again, if I haven't got the time to do that, then it's not going to be done." (Non-teaching staff)*

Here, the project leader indicates that a lack of time (outlined in the subtheme "No allocated time") will prevent progress, despite any timelines put in place to help the process.

Despite efforts to instil structures, they were, at times, elusive from the perspective of the project leader, preventing her from having a sense of control:

> *"I had an idea that it needed to be quite structured … That worked for the first couple [of meetings], then it kind of went out the window... When I sent out an email for agenda points, I got nothing back. So it was… me putting my own agenda points on there. I didn't feel particularly comfortable with that, because I didn't know if I was doing the right thing or not." (Non-teaching staff)*

Thus, the lack of engagement by other team members (namely, not contributing to the agenda) created a barrier for the project leader. This was another example of the project leader not having sufficient input from team members, which was also an issue outlined in the subtheme "No allocated time"[1].

Despite the project leader's perceived difficulties, at the end of the research period, three participants highlighted the effectiveness of structures put in place, as demonstrated here:

> *"All the minutes have been written up, all the agenda items have been written up, and everything's really clear about exactly what's happening in the process." (Teacher)*

Therefore structures were facilitators to the process, providing clarity and containment, although from the perspective of the project leader, these were, at times, difficult to

[1] In which team members found it hard to attend meetings due to not being allocated time to do so.

implement. The desire for structure bears no obvious relation on the staff wellbeing topic of the project and consequently, this is a generic finding relating to delivering school change initiatives.

4.6.2.1 Summary of subtheme "Structures"

Participants wanted structures to support the process and enable them to feel in control; structures were felt to be facilitators. However, the project leader found it difficult to sustain structures with other team members not always contributing to them.

4.6.3 Summary of theme "Out of control"

This theme presented data suggesting feelings of being out of control. Participants highlighted instances of not knowing what they were doing and the project leader sought to gain control through implementing structures. The next and final theme explores an indirect outcome of the project.

4.6.4 Relationship of the theme's key findings to the research questions

RQ1[1]: Structures were felt to be facilitators.

RQ3[2]: Staff seemingly experienced feelings of being out of control.

[1] RQ1 – What facilitates the activities associated with the early stages of a staff wellbeing project being carried out in a secondary school from the perspective of school staff?

[2] RQ3 – In the context of a secondary school carrying out a staff wellbeing project, how does the process impact on staff and project outcomes?

4.7 THEME: AN INDIRECT OUTCOME – DEVELOPING A WELLBEING NARRATIVE

As a result of the project, there was an indirect outcome of wellbeing being talked about and considered more beyond the project team.

Figure 8: Graphic representation of the theme "An indirect outcome – developing a wellbeing narrative"

> *"Participant: a side step from this, we … had… staff yoga… and … [staff are] trying to work out … facilities about staff football … I don't think those things would have been instigated if wellbeing wasn't kind of on the*
>
> *Interviewer: Wasn't being talked about.*
>
> *Participant: Yeah… It's kind of made people think about it more… like when the yoga couldn't happen any more, one of the first things was like 'Oh, it's really good for our wellbeing'. But I'm not sure whether previous to the data… that would have been brought up… They pay for the facility to play football on a Friday after school, and my head of department's going 'well actually these are guys coming together from school to play a team, like, physically better, mentally better; why do we need to pay for it?' But I don't think stuff like that would have happened without the initial kind of drive on wellbeing." (Teacher)*

The existence of the project brought the topic of wellbeing to the front of the minds of some staff and they identified the importance of staff wellbeing. It is unclear, from the data, whether this finding is specific to the staff wellbeing focus, due to the topic being of

personal relevance to staff, or whether any change project would increase school narrative about the area of change.

4.7.1 Summary of theme "An indirect outcome"

The existence of the staff wellbeing project brought the topic of staff wellbeing to the front of the minds of some wider school staff, resulting in an indirect outcome of staff wellbeing being talked about in the staff community.

4.7.2 Relationship of the theme's key findings to the research questions

RQ3[1]: There was an indirect outcome of an increased narrative about staff wellbeing in the school.

4.8 Summary of findings

In this chapter, the findings have been presented, which were organised into the following themes:

1. **The impact of notions of hierarchy**
2. **Is it really anonymous?**
3. **The importance of communication**
4. **Allocating resources**
5. **Achieving forward movement**
6. **Out of control**
7. **An indirect outcome – developing a wellbeing narrative**

The key findings are situated within the research questions as follows:

RQ1: What facilitates the activities associated with the early stages of a staff wellbeing project being carried out in a secondary school from the perspective of school staff?

Key facilitators for implementation, as identified by participants, were as follows. The school role of the project leader (non-SLT and non-teaching staff) and the presence of a member of

[1] RQ3 – In the context of a secondary school carrying out a staff wellbeing project, how does the process impact on staff and project outcomes?

SLT staff minimised the risk of project team members personalising[1] project activities. Being communicative was felt to be a facilitator. Due to the project focus being on staff wellbeing, it was important the project team was representative of the wider staff. Goals, visions and investment in the project facilitated forward movement. Persistence also facilitated forward movement. Structures, such as minutes and timelines, were felt to be facilitators.

RQ2: What acts as barriers to the activities associated with the early stages of a staff wellbeing project being carried out in a secondary school from the perspective of school staff?

Key barriers to implementation, as identified by participants, were as follows. School staff role impacted on the ability to contribute to the team. Issues of where responsibility for wellbeing and change lay acted as barriers. Failures of communication, not having allocated time, gaps in support and issues of pace were also barriers.

RQ3: In the context of a secondary school carrying out a staff wellbeing project, how does the process impact on staff and project outcomes?

In terms of impact on staff, discomfort was experienced in relation to pace and staff seemingly experienced feelings of being out of control.

In terms of project outcomes, despite a range of facilitators (outlined above in response to RQ1), the lack of allocated time was a significant enough barrier to stop the project continuing. There was also an indirect outcome of an increased narrative about staff wellbeing in the school.

RQ4: What is the role of the EP in supporting systemic change in the context of a secondary school carrying out a staff wellbeing project?

Participants indicated that they valued EPs providing knowledge, drive and timeframes; supporting resilience; and mitigating risk.

[1] Directing project activities to address their own individual needs.

RQ5: What are the features of the process of change associated with a staff wellbeing project in a secondary school that are specific to the staff wellbeing focus of the project?

The process of change associated with a staff wellbeing project included a range of findings that bear similarity to findings from other school-based change projects. The main exception to this was directly linked with the collecting of data on staff wellbeing, which in essence is personal and potentially sensitive information. Specifically, the role of the project leader (non-SLT and non-teaching staff) and the presence of a member of SLT staff minimised the risk of staff personalising project activities. Implementing a new practice of collecting personal staff data raised concerns as to who may be able to view the data and it was necessary to dispel such fears. The team's process was responsive to this need. There was delicacy required associated with communicating findings on staff. It was important the project team was representative of the wider staff. The staff wellbeing focus gave weight to the project, supporting wider staff investment and providing increased reason to persist.

CHAPTER FIVE – DISCUSSION

In this chapter, findings from the present research, presented in Chapter Four – Findings, will be discussed with reference to the literature presented in Chapter Two – Literature Review. This will be organised in relation to the research questions and is presented in the following sections:

- **Discussion of findings and literature relating to research questions one and two.** This includes the subsections: Staff roles; Communication; A representative team; Limited resources; Forward drivers; Structures.
- **Discussion of findings and literature relating to research question three.** This includes the subsections: A negative impact on staff; A good response to the questionnaire; A positive impact on staff awareness of their wellbeing.
- **Discussion of findings and literature relating to research question four.**
- **Discussion of findings and literature relating to research question five.** This includes the subsections: The personal nature of staff wellbeing; The importance of staff and their wellbeing.

At the end of this chapter I will address a further three important issues:

- **Unique contribution to knowledge.** This includes the subsections: The personalising of project activities; Other contributions to knowledge.
- **Limitations of the present research.**
- **Possibilities for further research.**

5.1 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND LITERATURE RELATING TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS ONE AND TWO

- **Research question one – What facilitates the activities associated with the early stages of a staff wellbeing project being carried out in a secondary school from the perspective of school staff?**
- **Research question two – What acts as barriers to the activities associated with the early stages of a staff wellbeing project being carried out in a secondary school from the perspective of school staff?**

In this section, research questions one and two are addressed together due to the interconnected relationship between facilitators and barriers. The discussion relating to these research questions is presented in the following sections:

- **Staff roles.** This includes the subsections: Staff role and the personalising of project activities; Staff role and trust; Staff role and participation; Hierarchy and responsibility.
- **Communication.**
- **A representative team.**
- **Limited resources.** This includes the subsections: Time; Support.
- **Forward drivers.** This includes the subsections: Goals and visions; Investment in and commitment to change; Persistence and pace.
- **Structures.**

5.1.1 STAFF ROLES

This section, which explores facilitators and barriers relating to the school roles of project team members, is broken down into the following four subsections:

- **Staff role and the personalising of project activities**
- **Staff role and trust**
- **Staff role and participation**
- **Hierarchy and responsibility**

5.1.1.1 Staff role and the personalising of project activities

The non-teaching staff role of the project leader was felt to be a facilitator in terms of minimising the risk of the project leader personalising project activities[1]. Additionally, the presence of SLT staff in the project team was felt to be facilitator, in that it prevented project team staff personalising project activities, due to staff remaining professional in the presence of SLT staff. These findings present as specific to a project focusing on staff needs and are not found in the existing literature. The importance placed on factors to support project team members to not personalise project activities highlights that this should be kept in mind when implementing staff wellbeing practices in schools.

[1] Directing activities to address their own individual needs, which relate to the pressures associated with carrying out a teaching role.

5.1.1.2 Staff role and trust

The project leader was not a member of the SLT. In the studies presented in Chapter Two – Literature Review, the dominant model for change was that led or initiated by SLT staff (for example Dering et al., 2006). Therefore, findings specific to the non-SLT leadership of the project present as useful in considering this less conventional approach to change. The non-SLT role of the project leader was a facilitator, supporting staff trust that the project was "for" them, rather than being done "to" them. This related to issues of hierarchy and power in the school and themes of hierarchy and power associated with direction of change[1] were also noted in the prior literature (Barker, 2005; Willoughby and Tosey, 2007). Some difficult relations between non-SLT and SLT staff were noted in the present study and an awareness of and responsiveness to this SLT/non-SLT relationship context was observed. The need to gain the trust of the wider staff is in line with the prior literature, which highlighted that leadership having the trust of the wider staff was a facilitator in effecting change (Barker, 2005). In the instance of the present research, the non-SLT role of the project leader was desired to facilitate the trust of the wider staff, whereas in prior literature there has been focus on leadership staff forging the required trust with the wider staff body (Barker, 2005). In the present research, issues of trust of SLT staff were not overcome, which meant that other issues presented[2]. This further highlights value in SLT staff working to forge the trust of the wider staff body, even in instances where projects are led by non-SLT staff. In the present research, the attempt to approach things differently (namely, having a non-SLT member of staff leading the project to support staff trust in the project) seemed notable and may have been due to the staff wellbeing focus of the project. As the value of eliciting staff trust has also been noted in the literature focusing on other areas of school change (Barker, 2005), this finding is clearly not exclusive to effecting change relating to staff wellbeing. However, participant emphasis on the importance of trust in the present study is also reflected in the literature focusing on the implementation of practices to support staff needs. For example, there was distrust in the programme of change in Hammersley-Fletcher and Lowe's (2006) study and distrust in the (appreciative inquiry) process studied in Anderson and Sice's (2016) paper. This shared focus on trust in the literature on implementing change associated with staff needs may indicate that gaining staff trust is of greater importance in this field.

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[1] Direction of change refers to whether change is effected from leadership – top-down – or non-leadership – bottom-up.

[2] Such as wider staff concerns regarding the anonymity of their data.

5.1.1.3 Staff role and participation

The fragility of relationships between SLT staff and non-SLT staff and there being some project focus on collecting staff views of SLT practices[1] meant that SLT staff found it difficult to contribute to the project team. This was noted as a barrier. This situation provides a stronger case for the project leader not being a member of the SLT (as explored in the previous section). This is a new finding that is specific to the collecting of staff views of SLT practices. Dering et al. (2006) highlight the need for leadership participation in relation to school readiness for change, indicating how limited leadership participation in the present study may have played a part in difficulties taking the project forwards. To overcome the barriers associated with SLT staff not participating for the reasons given above, the case has been made for the value of there being sufficient support (outlined in the forthcoming section "Limited resources"). A member of school staff who held a support role[2] in the school also experienced a barrier to participation. In keeping with the prior literature (Hammersley-Fletcher and Lowe, 2006), a member of support staff felt their voice may not have equal weight. A lack of equal voice negatively impacts on the representative nature of a project team (the importance of a representative team is discussed in the forthcoming section "A representative team"). This highlights the importance of project leaders being aware of this and seeking to ensure sufficient voice is given to staff lower down the hierarchy. The issue of a lack of equal voice for support staff was not directly linked with the staff wellbeing focus of the project. However, the importance of the team being representative seemed to be relevant to the staff wellbeing project, seeking to enable the project to serve the diversity of the staff team. This, therefore, places increased importance on representatives of all staff groups having sufficient voice to represent their sector of staff.

5.1.1.4 Hierarchy and responsibility

There were divergent perspectives of where responsibility for change and wellbeing lay, with non-SLT staff having an expectation of responsibility lying with SLT staff, whilst SLT staff wanted a more distributed model of responsibility. These differing expectations can also be seen in the literature. There can be a presumption of change leadership coming from above (for example, Dering et al., 2006). However, the relinquishing of control to other staff is also observed in the literature (for instance, Barker, 2006; Busher et al., 2001). The latter is deemed to promote creativity (Stoll and Temperley, 2009) but it was also observed to feel

[1] Which may impact on staff wellbeing.

[2] A non-teaching and non-SLT role.

threatening to some members of the school community, through the challenging of typical staff hierarchies (Willoughby and Tosey, 2007). As in the present study, in Quirk et al.'s (2018) research, issues regarding the wider staff not taking responsibility for their health and wellbeing were noted. The divergent view regarding responsibility in the present study was not openly discussed between SLT and non-SLT staff and was, therefore, not resolved. This acted as a barrier at a time when the impact of issues[1] prevented forward movement. It is important, therefore, that in cases where projects are led by non-SLT staff, explicit discussions are held between SLT staff and the project leader about the project, process and barriers, enabling the determining of factors such as responsibility for different components. Consequently, the taking of a meta view of project processes and barriers to them could have benefited the project, just as reflection on the process was noted to be of value in Dangerfield's (2012) study. It is, therefore, important that time and a mechanism are provided to enable this to occur regularly[2]. This highlights value in SLT staff support of the project leader (as outlined further in the forthcoming section "Support"). This finding was specific to a project being run by a non-SLT member of staff. In the school studied, the value placed on having non-SLT staff leading the project was notable and such circumstances highlight the need for a change of status quo in terms of where responsibility lies. A change in status quo can bring instability (Barker, 2006; Brown, 1999) and in the instance of the present study, the lack of clarity regarding where responsibility lay resulted in the ceasing of forward movement. This finding is not directly related to the staff wellbeing focus of the project. However, in some school change projects, it may be clearer as to where responsibility lies. For example, changes to literacy practices may be overseen by a head of literacy. This is also reflected in the prior literature with the issue of responsibility only noted in Quirk et al.'s (2018) study, which focused on (NHS) staff health and wellbeing. In the case of responsibility for staff wellbeing in the studied school, the SLT wanted to challenge typical hierarchies and empower all staff to be responsible for themselves. Therefore, in respect of staff wellbeing, they wanted a distributed leadership approach, as adopted in Barker's (2006) study, although this was not consistently achieved.

[1] Errors in the project team's analysis.

[2] Such as scheduled monthly meetings with a member of the SLT.

5.1.2 COMMUNICATION

Being communicative, such as within the team, was felt to be a facilitator. This fits with theory that highlights the value of communication to enable the forging of shared meaning (Anderson and Sice, 2016), suggesting that change occurs through communication (Anderson and Sice, 2016; Rogers, 2003). Also supporting this finding was the inference that failures of communication acted as barriers to project activities. A lack of communication with the wider staff (early in the project) was noted and a participant highlighted communication with the wider staff to be particularly important when change projects focus on staff wellbeing, to enable all staff to have the opportunity to be involved. Quirk et al. (2018) also emphasised the value of communication with the wider staff. Findings from the present study highlighted value in a multi-media approach to communications (in person and email) whereas Quirk et al.'s (2018) NHS study focused on the value of communicating in person. This difference may be attributable to the different type of organisation and different organisational cultural practices. Another failure of communication was noted, where attempts at communication (for example, emails and announcements in meetings) were not heard. Newton et al. (2016) highlighted senior management valuing of two-way communication in the exemplar 'Healthy Universities' setting that was studied. Whilst Hammersley-Fletcher and Lowe (2006) noted that the complexities of secondary settings may negatively impact communication. Communications not being heard is an unsurprising finding in a busy setting, such as a secondary school, where staff are under significant pressure and likely having to prioritise what they can give their attention to. Furthermore, the lack of allocated time (as explored in the forthcoming section "Limited resources") likely impacted the ability of the project team to attend to the communication needs of the wider staff, whilst also attending to the other project activities. Conclusions drawn in relation to communications not being heard highlight the need for communications to be delivered in excess of what may be felt to be necessary to attempt to reach more staff. In more general terms, there is value in being communicative and time being given to communication activities is important.

5.1.3 A REPRESENTATIVE TEAM

The initial project team was not representative and this was felt to be a barrier, with concerns about the questionnaire design and implementation of changes being unrepresentative of the wider staff body. This was specific to the staff focus of the project, with importance placed on including and representing the diversity of the staff team. The

issue of having a non-representative team was responded to proactively and a new, more representative team was formed, which was deemed a success. This fits with Fullan's (1993) assertion that there can be learning from problems[1], which can lead to success. The more representative team that was later forged was felt to be a facilitator, providing an across-school perspective and supporting wider staff trust in the project team, compared with the previous leadership-dominated team. This builds on Hammersley-Fletcher and Lowe's (2006) findings, where they noted differences between schools either achieving or not achieving representative teams. However, they did not comment on the impact of this, highlighting that the findings from the present study, regarding the value of a representative team, build on the prior literature. Furthermore, in the present study it was noted by a member of support staff that the representative team was teacher-heavy. Whilst this member of staff did recognise the teacher-heavy group to be representative, the comment may suggest this participant felt she had insufficient voice to represent her minority non-teaching staff group. This issue has also been represented in the prior literature on developing staff focused practices in schools (Anderson and Sice, 2016; Hammersley-Fletcher and Lowe, 2006), highlighting issues of the inclusion of support staff. These issues existed despite attempts at inclusion. This issue did not feature in the reviewed literature on non-staff focused school change efforts, suggesting, as do the findings of the present study, that importance is placed on inclusion of all staff groups due to the staff focus. This highlights that there is potential for further exploration of this issue to consider how staff in lower hierarchical positions can be given equal voice in change efforts, such as those focusing on staff wellbeing.

5.1.4 LIMITED RESOURCES

This section, which explores the limited resources available to the project team, is broken down into the following two subsections:

- **Time**
- **Support**

5.1.4.1 Time

In the present study, there was no allocated time for project activities; it was expected that project team members would carry out project activities as well as their typical workload. This presented as the most significant project barrier, with the project leader feeling

[1] Namely, the issue of not having a representative team.

continuation was not possible unless time was allocated to her to carry out the project lead role. The lack of allocated time also made it very difficult for the team to meet as a whole, which created barriers to group decision-making and impacted on the individual sense of project continuity. This builds on the prior literature. Stoll and Temperley (2009) highlighted the value of time and space for creative thinking, for ideas to be explored and to evolve, whilst Dering et al. (2006) highlighted the need for time for planning and strategy formation. Quirk et al. (2018) also stated that time, as a result of pressurised work environments, was an issue for wider staff involvement in health and wellbeing practices. It is indicated in the findings of the present study that the project lacked priority in relation to other school activities, which prevented the release of staff to attend project meetings. There was a need for SLT staff to place importance on the project to enable staff to be released from other demands to attend project meetings. The project would have been prioritised if it was viewed as being more important than other activities. This suggests that the issue of staff wellbeing may not have been of sufficient significance to the SLT in relation to other school needs. Dering et al. (2006) indicated a need for schools to be ready for change, which included being ready in terms of priorities and the dominant school culture being suitable. In essence, it seems this may have not been sufficiently the case in the school at the centre of the present study. Boyatzis' (1999) model of self-directed change highlights the need for behavioural change to come from 'internal dissonance'. It seems there was a lack of internal dissonance on the part of the SLT in relation to the need to address staff wellbeing to enable them to give the project sufficient priority. The issue of no allocated time was not obviously specific to the staff wellbeing focus of the project. However, the lack of prioritisation of the project, against other school demands, does highlight the need for staff wellbeing to be viewed as high priority to support project progress.

It should be acknowledged that the staff wellbeing project in the present study was additional to work that is required of the school. This placed the project in competition with the more mandatory aspects of education. Unless national expectations are placed on schools to deliver staff wellbeing programmes, this presents as an issue that could occur in other schools attempting such a project. Should a national drive for schools to implement staff wellbeing-focused practices be considered, it would be important for sufficient resources to be provided (for example, funding for staff time to devise and deliver programmes) to not put further strain on staff wellbeing (specifically the wellbeing of project staff).

5.1.4.2 Support

A lack of SLT support for the non-SLT project leader and lack of specialist research support also created barriers, with the former leaving the project leader feeling isolated and the latter resulting in errors being made in the analysis. This adds to findings from the prior research in which it was suggested that there is value in having sufficient support (Barker, 2006; Busher et al., 2001; Dangerfield, 2012; Dering et al., 2006) including for those leading change (Barker, 2006, 2005). In Fullan's (1993) model, two-way negotiation, pressure and support between senior staff and non-senior staff is advocated for. Barker (2006, 2005) noted the value of supportive approaches, which balanced some of the challenges associated with change. There were some tenuous links between the present study findings regarding support and the staff wellbeing focus of the project. It was felt there may be a risk of project team staff focusing their research activities on their own personal needs (such as in their interpretation of the data), which is relevant to the staff wellbeing focus of the project. This could provide a rationale for the project team having support in carrying out research to help staff avoid this personalising of research activities. It could be argued that Doctoral level trained EPs could be well placed to provide such support[1]. Additionally, the need for a non-SLT project leader seemed to relate to the staff wellbeing focus of the project and this resulted in the need for the project leader to have support from the SLT.

Other findings indicating the need for support, such as to limit the risk of making errors when carrying out research, were not specific to the staff wellbeing focus of the project. Whilst the project leader focused on a need for SLT staff support, the SLT staff focus on the benefits of a non-SLT staff member leading the project suggests the SLT may have hoped the project team would be self-organising (Camazine et al., 2003; Schiller, 2002). Whilst a self-organising team seemed to occur in the initiating of the project questionnaire, this was not sustained when the team were faced with more contentious difficulties[2], highlighting a need for consideration of how self-organising systems[3] can be supported to be so under more difficult circumstances. This speaks to complexity theory (Manson, 2001), where changes in specific areas result in complex behaviours. For example, the shift in personnel early in the project (resulting in a non-SLT member of staff emerging as project leader) – a change – was felt to support wider staff trust in the project and the project starting to gain momentum

[1] Should there be sufficient funding for EPs to deliver this.

[2] Errors that were made in analysis that presented findings that had a negative focus.

[3] Namely, without direction from SLT staff.

through the actions of staff involved – changes in behaviour – (as discussed in the earlier "Staff roles" section). Later, the errors made in analysis – a change – impacted on the wellbeing of the project leader – a change in behaviour (as presented in the later section "A negative impact on staff"). Finally, some of the data gathered by the project team was negative in tone. This created difficulties for the team regarding how this would be shared with leadership and the wider staff body. Anyone supporting a school to carry out their own research may want to be mindful of this. This provides support for taking a positively focused approach, such as a solution-focused approach, as suggested by a participant, or an appreciative inquiry approach, such as is seen in Anderson and Sice's (2016) study.

5.1.5 FORWARD DRIVERS

This section on factors that acted as forward drivers is broken down into the following three subsections:

- **Goals and visions**
- **Investment in and commitment to change**
- **Persistence and pace**

5.1.5.1 Goals and visions

Participants identified the vision of improving staff wellbeing and the goal of taking an evidence-based approach and these acted as forward drivers. The vision of improving staff wellbeing provided a loose focus. This, coupled with the communicative team (as outlined in the earlier section "Communication"), supports Rogers' (2003) model 'Diffusion of innovation', which indicates how communication within a social system, namely, the project team, enables vision to be realised in implementation. Stoll and Temperley (2009) identify change to be a creative process and determine that a condition for creativity is to keep the vision in mind. Dangerfield (2012) observed vision to be a component of their process of change. The goal to be evidence-based in approach provided a clear structure to follow (namely, the need to measure staff wellbeing (the collecting of evidence) to subsequently guide any changes to school practices that may be required). This model of approach was also noted to be helpful in Quirk et al.'s (2018) NHS study. Barker's (2005) findings indicated that keeping goals in mind is of value. Willoughby and Tosey (2007) indicated that that the appreciative inquiry approach used to guide the process of change in the school they studied facilitated the generating of ideas that could be pursued. Yet the absence of an appreciative

inquiry approach in the present study was not a barrier to the team determining the evidence-based goal, and their visions for improved staff wellbeing were likely existing ideals that were given an opportunity to be realised through the project. These findings of having goals and visions were not specific to the staff wellbeing focus of the project.

5.1.5.2 Investment in and commitment to change

Seemingly there was investment (on the part of the headteacher, project team members and the wider staff body) in the project as a result of the visions that participants wanted to realise. This was deemed to be a facilitator, with forward movement noted as a result of the investment. Wider staff investment in participating in the questionnaire was felt to have been fostered specifically due to the staff wellbeing focus of the questionnaire, the first of its kind in the school. Anderson and Sice's (2016) findings presented a very different experience, with limited staff participation in their staff wellbeing-focused questionnaire, which was attributed to 'questionnaire fatigue'. Similarly to the commitment seen in the present study, commitment to the 'Healthy Universities' programme was noted in a Healthy Universities exemplar setting, suggesting value in the commitment to the health and wellbeing of staff to facilitate the implementation of practices to support staff needs. Their approach was more embedded in the organisation, with the scheme viewed as being part of its core business (Newton et al., 2016). Incorporation of a whole organisation strategy was also noted to be helpful in Quirk et al.'s (2018) NHS based study. In the present study, there was not a sense of the project being viewed as part of the core business of the school, with the business of the project operating separately to other school activities. This perhaps highlights the value of committing in a more holistic and integrative manner, and building links between the project and other parts of school staff life. The literature on commitment to projects is not exclusive to projects focusing on staff need. Headteacher (Dering et al., 2006) and wider staff (Dangerfield, 2012) commitment to change are noted to be of value in the wider school change literature, and the present study builds on this.

Despite the findings indicating staff investment, there were gaps, with it noted that some members of the SLT were not invested in the project. This may have been a barrier but the data does not indicate the extent of the impact of this[1]. Fullan (1993) highlighted that for school change, everyone needs to be an agent of change, implying that the gaps in the investment of staff in the present study may have been a barrier. Anderson and Sice (2016)

[1] More practical aspects, such as no allocated time, were attributed to the prevention of forward movement.

noted headteacher engagement to be essential. Whilst Dering et al. (2006) highlighted the need for leadership participation to provide a sense of readiness for change. Willoughby and Tosey (2007) noted that the appreciative inquiry approach, used in the school at the centre of their study, fostered commitment to the improving of practices. In the present study, attempts to alleviate concerns regarding the anonymity of the handling of staff data were deemed to be successful in supporting the participation of the wider staff team, which could be considered to be a process where commitment to the project was fostered. This highlights that there are a variety of ways to foster staff commitment to change projects.

5.1.5.3 Persistence and pace

In the present study, a participant highlighted the significance of the forward driver of persisting, due to the importance of staff wellbeing. This situates this finding as specific to the staff wellbeing focus of the project and highlights that increased value should be placed on persevering with implementation and embedding of practices relating to supporting staff wellbeing. This is a new finding, in the context of the existing literature on the implementation of staff wellbeing practices. Finally, the pace of the project was a point of contention and was felt to be a barrier, either where it was felt the pace was too slow (where a criticism of the slow pace indicated it prevented forward movement), or where it was felt to be too fast (preventing reflection and planning). The project leader highlighted that the slow pace did not mean that forward movement was not occurring and she indicated that trust was needed that she would deliver on the project mandate. Barker (2005) highlighted that in his study; trust afforded to the change leader from above was an enabler and some absence of this in the present study seemed to cause some difficulties. The dominant school culture to work at a fast pace once a project team was formed was not appropriate to the project and Dering et al. (2006) highlighted how dominant school culture can impact on readiness to change. The wanting to move the project forward at a fast pace presents as a school wanting change. This highlights that readiness to change is not simply about willing change forwards; instead, other qualities, such as the need for time to reflect, may be key for a school to actually be ready to effect change.

The approach used in initiating the project at the centre of the present study was adapted (compared with other change projects in the school) due to the need to include non-SLT staff in the early phase of planning, which ordinarily would be carried out by the SLT prior to forming a project team. Therefore, the issues around pace can be, at least in part, attributed to this change in status quo. A change in status quo can bring instability (Barker, 2006;

Brown, 1999) and the difficulties experienced in relation to different perspectives of pace suggest an experience of instability in the present study. This issue was not openly discussed within the team or between the project leader and SLT staff. This negatively impacted on the project leader. In Barker's (2005) study, it was noted that focus was given to achieving stability, in relation to the unstable, messy process of change. This again suggests the need for time to consider and discuss underlying process issues (as outlined in the earlier section "Hierarchy and responsibility"). In the presented literature, there was little emphasis on those effecting change being mindful of processes and this neglected area of focus could make a notable difference, by enabling staff to consider and address barriers. Whilst the issue of pace, in itself, is not specific to the staff wellbeing focus of the project; the need for non-SLT staff involvement at this early stage was due to the staff wellbeing focus of the project, which was one cause of the slow pace. This finding has not been observed in the prior literature on the implementation of staff-focused projects. It presents as relevant where there is a combination of an adapted way of initiating a project[1], which results in a slower process, coupled with a school cultural expectation for fast results.

5.1.6 Structures

Structures, specifically the use of agendas, minutes and timelines, were felt to be facilitators, although the project leader found them difficult to maintain without sufficient support from other team members. This finding was not specific to the staff wellbeing focus of the project. Similarly, in Hayes and Stringer's (2016) study, EPs who provided tight time structures in meetings were valued by school staff. These findings suggest a sense of safety, security and control come from having structures that provide boundaries and that this is experienced as helpful, perhaps providing welcome relief from the messiness of change (Barker, 2005; Busher et al., 2001). The messiness of change is explored further in the following section.

5.1.7 Summary of discussion relating to research questions one and two

There were a range of facilitators and barriers experienced by participants and many of the findings in this section are in line with theory and the prior literature. Some exceptions to this are presented in this summary. School staff roles of project team members (such as the

[1] Such as to be more appropriate to the staff wellbeing focus.

non-SLT role of the project leader and SLT staff role in the project team) impacted project activities, acting as both facilitators and barriers. Some findings regarding the impact of staff roles related to the staff wellbeing focus of the project. The non-teaching role of the project leader and the presence of SLT staff was felt to minimise the personalisation of the project activities. These findings were not observed in the prior literature. The impact of collecting staff views regarding leadership practices on SLT participation in the project was also a new finding. Additionally, the value of SLT support for the non-SLT project leader was a new finding, largely due to the literature being dominated by SLT-led or initiated change programmes.

Communication and a lack thereof acted as a facilitator and barrier respectively and a participant highlighted that communication with the wider staff was of particular importance due to the staff wellbeing focus of the project. A lack of representativeness in the team early in the project was noted as a barrier, whilst the subsequent, more representative team was a facilitator. This built on the prior literature, where the impact of representation (or lack of) was not illuminated. Importance was placed on the team being representative due to the staff wellbeing focus of the project and the need to represent the wider staff in project activities. There was an absence of the resources of time and support, presenting as barriers to the project. In the case of the need for sufficient support, there were some tenuous links with the staff wellbeing focus (such as the need for support of the non-SLT project leader, who was deemed more appropriate to lead the project due to the staff wellbeing focus). Additionally, the need for support with carrying out research to prevent staff members personalising project activities was noted and this presents as a new finding. Most of the forward drivers in the project were noted to be facilitators, with the exception of pace, which was determined to be a barrier. Some of the forward drivers related to the staff wellbeing focus of the project, such as the significance of persisting due to the importance of supporting staff wellbeing. This was a new finding. Furthermore, the slow pace at the start of the project was in part attributed to the need to adopt a different way of working to include non-SLT staff from early on. This was also a new finding. Finally, structures were noted to be facilitators and this was not noted to be specific to the staff wellbeing focus of the project.

5.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND LITERATURE RELATING TO RESEARCH QUESTION THREE

- **Research question three – In the context of a secondary school carrying out a staff wellbeing project, how does the process impact on staff and project outcomes?**

The following three sections seek to answer research question three:

- **A negative impact on staff**
- **A good response to the questionnaire**
- **A positive impact on staff awareness of their wellbeing**

5.2.1 A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON STAFF

As noted previously, staff were impacted by the project process. Errors made in the project team's analysis and the lack of allocated time negatively impacted the wellbeing of the project leader. In relation to the pace of the project, one participant highlighted feelings of being disenfranchised from the project due to the pace being too slow. Conversely, the project leader reported "shutting-down" in response to the pressure to work at a fast pace, particularly in light of the team's lack of experience and time. In response to lack of experience was a sense that team members felt out of control, with individuals not always being clear as to what the team was doing. One reference to this indicated that this may be due to the wellbeing focus being "softer subject matter", making this finding potentially specific to the project topic of staff wellbeing. However, these findings also relate to previous studies not specifically focused on staff wellbeing, where the messiness (Barker, 2005; Busher et al., 2001) and challenges (Anderson and Sice, 2016) associated with change have been shown to negatively impact staff wellbeing. James and Jones (2008) reported senior staff anxiety about implementing change, resulting in wider staff anxiety about the changes being made. Additionally, Barker (2006, 2005) observed a headteacher and staff experience ill health in response to change projects, resulting in some requiring time off work and seeking alternative employment. Anderson and Sice (2016) observed that the delivering of group work sessions was demanding on the 'school staff wellbeing manager' and Busher et al. (2001) also found that change had a negative impact, with staff feeling alienated as a result. In the present study, the impact of the errors made in the analysis and the lack of allocated time for the project leader halted progress and put the future of the project in jeopardy. This highlights the importance of there being sufficient time as well as

resilience in the process of change and the messiness it can likely bring about. Stoll and Temperley (2009) highlighted that mistakes and failings should be considered opportunities for learning. Mistakes and failings can be seen as a tool for developing resilience, where difficulties are drawn on positively to provide a way forward through periods of difficulty. This was observed at times, such as when it was recognised that a representative team was needed and this was acted on. However, resilience was not sustained throughout. Other difficulties were experienced and the strain of not having sufficient time likely prevented the level of reflection needed to take a learning and resilient approach to all of the difficulties faced. Whilst there may be challenges associated with a staff wellbeing focus, the issue of change projects having a negative impact on staff is not exclusive to this area of study.

5.2.2 A GOOD RESPONSE TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE

When wider staff investment in the project was required, great efforts were made to communicate with the staff team using multimedia, including to alleviate fears regarding anonymity associated with the questionnaire. This effort put into developing the trust of the wider staff body has also been noted as a feature of the change process in Barker's (2005) research. The response to the questionnaire was deemed a success and this highlights that the team's process in communicating with the staff team appears to have had a positive impact on the outcome of a good response rate to the questionnaire. The literature speaks to the value of including staff in the process of change (Barker, 2006; Busher et al., 2001; Dangerfield, 2012; Dering et al., 2006; Willoughby and Tosey, 2007). The present study's findings bring more detail to this generalised view as there was a successful response rate to the questionnaire in spite of an absence of involvement of the wider staff team earlier in the process. This highlights that it is possible to overcome the issue of not including the wider staff in the process from the start, providing sufficient attempts to communicate with them are made at the point in time at which their involvement is required. Furthermore, the staff wellbeing focus of the project as well as this being the first time that staff were invited to engage in an activity related to their needs were also noted to act as an impetus for wider staff engagement. Engagement may also have been supported by the nature of the project; staff were invited to give their view (to guide future practices), rather than engage in practices they had not agreed to (as supported by the literature, which speaks of the value of including staff, as indicated above).

5.2.3 A POSITIVE IMPACT ON STAFF AWARENESS OF THEIR WELLBEING

In addition to the practice implemented, there was an indirect outcome of the project; the development of a staff narrative about their wellbeing, hence a cultural shift was noted. In Quirk et al.'s (2018) study, there was purposeful focus on achieving a cultural shift towards healthy mindsets, although this was done by changing practices, such as in the staff canteen, rather than it organically developing as a staff narrative. Within the developed narrative in the present study, value was placed on practices (separate to those of the project) that supported staff wellbeing. This highlights that there may be more outcomes than those that were specifically sought. In Preece et al.'s (2012) study, actions such as the carrying out of a needs assessment and the involvement of staff in the planning and design of practices increased the likelihood of NHS trusts delivering wellbeing training. However, the paper was not clear as to whether the needs assessment or the involvement of staff specifically targeted the implementation of training or if this was an indirect outcome due to a more general increased awareness of the importance of staff wellbeing. This finding was not specific to the staff wellbeing focus of the project, in that any area of change may increase staff awareness of the project focus area.

5.2.4 SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION RELATING TO RESEARCH QUESTION THREE

The impact of the process on staff and project outcomes included a negative impact on some project team members. This included the possible impact of working with the “softer subject matter” of wellbeing (namely, not a tangible topic), but largely related to the wider issue of the challenges of the process of change. This has also been reflected in the prior literature. Efforts made in communicating with the wider staff team and alleviating concerns relating to trust (in the context of collecting personal data from staff) resulted in a good response to the project questionnaire. The prior literature indicated the importance of involving the wider staff from the outset. The project at the centre of the present research did not do this but still had a positive outcome of engaging the wider staff as a result of a number of factors, including the efforts made to communicate with and build trust of staff immediately prior to the time when engagement was desired. The findings relating to engaging staff, therefore, build on previous studies in this area. Additional to the project aims, increased staff awareness and a narrative regarding the importance of staff wellbeing was noted. Literature exploring indirect outcomes is sparse and this, therefore, adds to the literature base.

5.3 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND LITERATURE RELATING TO RESEARCH QUESTION FOUR

- **Research question four – What is the role of the EP in supporting systemic change in the context of a secondary school carrying out a staff wellbeing project?**

The following explores the potential for the EP role in supporting systemic change in schools. It may be that the EP is not the only type of professional who could provide the following support, but arguably, the EP could be well placed to take this role. Findings from the present study indicated staff wanted me (in the role of trainee EP) to provide knowledge where they may have gaps in knowledge and one participant explicitly stated that she wanted "guidance and expertise" from me. The EP taking an 'expert' role is a position which Wagner's (2000) EP consultative model seeks to move EPs away from. This presented conflict between how I may have hoped to work, in the role as trainee EP, and what was expected. However, the sharing of knowledge could be carried out with a view to empowering school staff, by providing them with the information needed to enable them to make the best decisions possible for their school. Conversely, the provision of guidance, such as steering schools towards certain decisions, may be riskier when seeking to maintain a non-expert role. The desire for EP 'expertise' did not present as specific to the project focus of staff wellbeing.

Similarly, it was also felt of value to have EP involvement to mitigate risk. Whilst it was not clearly specified, it appeared likely that the perceived risk to "staff morale" related to the collecting of staff wellbeing data, with there being a chance of getting controversial results. As a result of errors that were made by the project team, there was a negative impact on the project, which was noted to stall progress. Increased project team resilience may have benefited the process and the school EP could be well placed to support such resilience. As well as considering areas of school vulnerability to be built on, the EP could also emphasise that effecting change is difficult and negative experiences and discomfort are a part of the process, rather than an indication of personal failure. This could in turn normalise negative experiences and support resilience. It was not explicitly stated that the concerns regarding risk were due to the staff wellbeing focus of the project. However, it is plausible that this is the reason as this is an emotive subject; if the project were not to meet the expectations of better supporting the needs of staff, this could be demoralising. This is a new finding in this area of research.

It was also noted by a participant, in the early phase of the research period, that I provided the project with drive. This was at a time when I supported the project in my role of trainee EP. In the context of the present research, this comment was made from a position of concern as to whether the project would continue without EP support. Similarly, the project team drew on my research timeframe to consider their own timescale of project activities. In Watson and Geest's (2010) study, project momentum was supported by the researcher simply sporadically visiting and enquiring about developments. These findings highlight the value placed in an external party, such as an EP, having regular contact with those delivering change to support the drive of the project and the setting of timeframes for change. In essence, it seems to be beneficial for those effecting change to have someone external to be accountable to. Doctoral level trained EPs could also be well placed to provide support with carrying out research (as discussed more fully in the earlier section "Support").

The majority of the above findings relating to the role of the EP seem relevant to EPs supporting organisational level change in general and for the most part are not specific to the staff wellbeing focus of the project. Hence the present study makes the case for the value of EP support for schools effecting change at the organisational level, which is also supported by the literature (Farrell et al., 2006). With schools not typically recognising this area of EP work and not wanting to use their EP time in this way (Davies et al., 2008), it will be important for the profession to communicate this potential of the role to schools and highlight the value this may provide. For example, in the case of supporting change to better serve staff needs, it may be of value for EPs to communicate to schools that EP time in this area may help staff wellbeing and, therefore, staff performance. This could enable staff to better serve the range of students' needs, reducing the need for EP focus on individual casework. Alternatively, a local or national focus on improving staff wellbeing, with funding attached to enable to schools to access EP support to build on staff wellbeing practices, would also enable schools to improve on staff wellbeing in what is recognised to be a high pressure field (Teacher Support Network, 2009).

5.3.1 Summary of discussion relating to research question four

The present research highlighted that the EP can provide the following to the process of organisational level change: knowledge (to address school gaps in knowledge); the mitigation of risk; support to achieve school staff resilience for coping with the challenges of

change; external accountability, such as to support the maintenance of momentum; and support with carrying out research. With the exception of mitigating risk, these findings did not present as specific to the staff wellbeing focus of the project and could be relevant to a range of school change initiatives. Discussion is provided on the EP providing knowledge and how this may or may not sit comfortably in relation to the issue of the EP being in the role of 'expert', which contributes to this area of discussion in the literature. In the area of mitigating risk, it presented as likely that this was more important in light of the staff wellbeing focus of the project, and this is a new finding.

5.4 Discussion of findings and literature relating to research question five

- **Research question five – What are the features of the process of change associated with a staff wellbeing project in a secondary school that are specific to the staff wellbeing focus of the project?**

Some of the process of change associated with implementing a staff wellbeing practice was relevant to implementing other practices in a secondary school. For example, having sufficient time to carry out change project activities and the aid of having goals and visions to guide the direction of the project are aspects that are relevant to a range of school change projects. However, there were also aspects that were specific to the staff wellbeing focus of the project, which will be detailed in response to this research question in the following two sections:

- **The personal nature of staff wellbeing**
- **The importance of staff and their wellbeing**

5.4.1 The personal nature of staff wellbeing

Participants noted that there was risk of project team members focusing project activities on their own individual wellbeing needs, rather than seeking to keep the focus of the project on meeting the needs of the wider staff body. However, there were factors that reduced this risk of personalising[1] project activities. The project leader not being a member of teaching staff was deemed to be beneficial due to a belief that stressors on teachers (which is

[1] Directing the project focus to address their own individual needs.

supported by the literature (Teacher Support Network, 2009)) would prevent a more objective position from being taken. Additionally, a small presence of SLT staff in the team was felt to be a facilitator, with non-SLT staff seeking to remain professional in the presence of SLT staff and, therefore, not personalising project activities. These findings highlight the potential of project team members personalising project activities and indicate the importance of considering measures to prevent this from occurring.

Due to the personal nature of seeking to collect staff views on wellbeing, there was potential of staff having to expose themselves when providing their views. Members of the wider staff body were reported to have concerns about who may be able to view data, despite communications indicating that the data would be handled anonymously. This seemed to be heightened due to the school culture focused on the school and staff being 'outstanding', which was indicated to conflict with the need for staff to be open or engage at all (due to concerns regarding anonymity). The project leader and team worked hard at dispelling staff fears to enable trust (trust of the wider staff was also acknowledged as being valuable in Barker's (2005) study) and participation. This highlights that measures need to be taken to enable staff to feel safe and these measures need communicating to the wider staff body to enable participation. Furthermore, it was noted that sensitivity was required regarding communicating the findings to the SLT and the wider staff body. It was specifically noted that it would not be helpful to communicate "statistics of how everyone's feeling", indicating the delicacy of reporting findings about staff wellbeing.

By their very nature, the findings in this section relating to the personal nature of staff wellbeing are specific to the staff wellbeing focus of the project at the centre of the present study. With the exception of the importance of trust of the wider staff, these findings are new contributions to the knowledge base.

5.4.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF STAFF AND THEIR WELLBEING

Importance was placed on staff and their wellbeing, which impacted on the project process. Due to the staff wellbeing focus of the project it was felt important that the project team was representative of the wider staff team. Participation from all levels of the organisation was also noted in Newton et al.'s (2016) study of an exemplar 'Healthy Universities' setting. Other literature on implementing staff related practices in schools focuses on the similarly important issue of inclusion of lower hierarchical staff in change efforts (Anderson and Sice, 2016; Hammersley-Fletcher and Lowe, 2006), which likewise is important for staff

representation. Additionally, the topic of staff wellbeing meant that it was felt important to persist with the project and also enabled wider staff investment in the project. Therefore, the importance of staff and their wellbeing carried weight as well as influenced the approaches taken. It is important that school staff undertaking such projects are aware of this. Extra time may be necessary to attend to such project needs (for example, recruiting a representative team). Furthermore, perhaps a project of this kind should not be undertaken unless it can be committed to on a long-term basis, so as to not devalue the worth of staff in the instance of a failure to implement and sustain practices.

5.4.3 Summary of discussion relating to research question five

Findings specific to the process of change associated with the staff wellbeing focus included issues or potential issues relating to the personal nature of staff wellbeing. This included the risk of project team members personalising[1] project activities and the exposing nature of staff providing data relating to their personal wellbeing. These findings are new contributions to knowledge. Additionally, the importance of staff and their wellbeing placed extra weight on the need to persist with the project and the need for the project team to be representative of the wider staff team. This importance on the team being representative, in the context of a staff wellbeing project, reflects findings from the prior literature.

5.5 Unique contribution to knowledge

5.5.1 The personalising of project activities

Findings relating to the personalising of project activities (namely, project staff directing activities to address their own individual needs) provide a new contribution to the knowledge base. These findings specifically highlighted the value of having a non-teaching member of staff leading the project (as it was felt a teacher may seek to personalise project activities due to teacher stress) and the presence of SLT staff was felt to support team members to remain professional. These findings were specific to the staff wellbeing focus of the project. Relating to this issue of personalisation, in the project studied there was some focus on collecting data on staff views of leadership practices. This resulted in SLT project members minimising their participation in the project team to avoid personalisation, leaving the project team isolated from SLT support. This finding is a new contribution to the

[1] Directing the project focus to address their own individual needs.

knowledge base due to the specific circumstances of the project not featuring in previous literature.

5.5.2 Other contributions to knowledge

Other new contributions to knowledge included:

- **Significance placed on persisting with the project due to the importance of staff wellbeing.**
- **The ability to overcome the issue of not including the wider staff in the process of change from the start by providing lots of communication (at the time of involving them) and by their first involvement enabling them to contribute their view.**
- **The value of having EP support to reduce risks to staff morale, potentially associated with the sensitive nature of the topic of staff wellbeing.**

5.6 Limitations of the present research

The findings relating to the EP role were limited. Due to having been involved in the earlier stages of the project in the role of trainee EP, as well as being the researcher, the research design included an anonymous questionnaire for participants to complete to provide me with feedback on my involvement. However, there was a very limited response to the questionnaire and, therefore, this data set was not viable for inclusion in analysis (although was drawn on in Chapter Six – Reflexive Account). Extra reminders to participate in the anonymous questionnaire during the research process or an alternative way of collecting this data may have better served the research aims of considering the role of the EP in supporting systemic change. At interview there was a small amount of reference to the EP role (as outlined in the response to research question four earlier in this chapter). In addition to these participant views, in my analysis I identified two other roles for the EP; to support the research and project team resilience. These were conclusions I drew rather than views that were presented by participants.

Whilst the case study design focusing on one school enabled a depth of study, this also limited the findings to the confines of one school and prevents comparison between settings or a broader more general view to be taken. Nevertheless, there were findings that are reflective of prior research, such as staff experiencing a negative impact of challenges experienced in the process of effecting change. Furthermore, new findings, such as those

more specific to the unique nature of the present study (for example, the importance of project team members not personalising project activities) are important to reflect on and provide a starting point from which other research can build.

The present study focused on the early stages of a staff wellbeing project. Whilst this shorter-term view was able to highlight some barriers to sustaining such a project (for example the lack of allocated time for the project leader), conclusions about sustaining such a project on a longer-term basis cannot be drawn. The purpose of the school project at the centre of this study was to measure staff wellbeing[1] and then respond to this by adapting or implementing practices as required. In the period studied, the team planned and implemented their staff wellbeing questionnaire and analysed their findings, but did not reach the stage of practice adaptation/implementation. Thus, this study does not consider the processes and activities associated with implementing or adapting practices to attempt to promote wellbeing. Despite this, I was able to note the impact of the process (of implementation of the questionnaire) on staff and project outcomes (covered earlier in response to research question three).

Finally, the specific focus of the research and the literature review was adapted after the data collection period, presenting as another limitation of this study. This included: building on the clarity of the aims and rationale for the literature review; reviewing of the research questions to ensure they reflected the intended aims of the study; and ensuring that a systematic approach to the literature review was taken, including ensuring there were clear questions that the literature review sought to address.

5.7 Possibilities for further research

There is limited literature in the field of study exploring how staff wellbeing practices are implemented in schools, which provides a range of opportunities for research. Repetition of the present study in another school would highlight how similar or different the findings may be in a different setting. Similarly, the focus of the present study could also be repeated in research focusing on a number of schools to provide a broader view of the specific circumstances associated with the present study. The two closely related prior studies (Anderson and Sice, 2016; Hammersley-Fletcher and Lowe, 2006) each took a broader view of eight schools. Hammersley-Fletcher and Lowe's (2006) study focused on change

[1] Through a questionnaire.

associated with staff workload, whilst Anderson and Sice (2016) studied the use of an appreciative inquiry approach for developing staff wellbeing, leaving other approaches to addressing staff wellbeing untouched in terms of taking a broad cross-school approach. Key findings from the present study that provide a unique contribution to the literature highlight the personal and, therefore, the sensitive nature of staff wellbeing and the collection of data relating to staff wellbeing. This had a number of impacts. It was highlighted through the other new finding that persistence with the project was of particular importance due to the staff wellbeing focus. Further research to build on these new findings will be necessary to confirm if the findings are generalisable to a range of secondary school settings.

In the present study, importance was placed on having a representative team. The point was raised that staff in lower hierarchical positions (namely, support staff) may have found it hard to have a voice in the representative grouping, in which there were staff from a range of hierarchical positions. This was despite the focus on achieving a representative team. This difficulty has also been highlighted in the previous research. Therefore, future research exploring ways that staff lower down in the hierarchy can be given a voice in organisational level change would be of value, particularly for projects focusing on staff need, where it is important that all staff are represented. Furthermore, the present study collected data from the project team staff. Gathering the views of the wider staff regarding their perspective on such a project could be of value.

Due to the limitations associated with findings regarding the role of the EP in supporting systemic change (as indicated in the previous section), future research could provide more insight on this. The conclusions of the present study indicate that there is a place for the EP to communicate to schools: the role the EP can take in supporting organisational level change; and the value in providing this kind of support. Future research could explore this further to consider how the profession may develop their communication of this potential part of their role.

With much of the prior literature on change in schools being led or initiated by SLT staff, there would be value in the present study's findings associated with a non-SLT member of staff leading change being built on by future research. Findings from the present research indicated that the self-organising system of a team[1] can struggle to sustain itself when faced

[1] Namely, a team that is not directed by SLT staff.

with notable difficulties. Research that explores ways that such self-organising systems can overcome significant difficulties would be of value. In relation to overcoming difficulties, the present study highlighted that increased project team resilience may have been of benefit and presented the development of this as a role for the EP. Future research could explore this and illuminate how project team resilience may best be supported. Finally, it seems there is a lack of research highlighting indirect outcomes from school change projects and further consideration of how projects impact on schools may be of value.

The original aims of the present study were to take an ethnographic approach, collecting meeting data to include in the analysis. For practicable reasons, I was unable to use this data. An ethnographic approach, such as this, may provide more in-depth insight and may be an opportunity for a future piece of research.

5.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In response to research questions one and two, there were a range of facilitators and barriers experienced by the project team, relating to: the school staff roles of the project team members; communication; the value of having a representative team; the limited resources of time and support; a range of forward drivers; and structures that the team attempted to put in place. With the exception of structures, each of these key areas included some findings that were specific to the staff wellbeing focus of the project. A summary of how these findings relate to the prior literature base is presented in the earlier section “Summary of discussion relating to research questions one and two”.

Regarding research question three, the process: negatively impacted on some project team members; positively impacted on wider staff response to the project questionnaire; and positively impacted on wider staff awareness and narrative of the importance of staff wellbeing. Some of these findings related to the staff wellbeing focus on the project. A summary of how these findings relate to the prior literature base is presented in the earlier section “Summary of discussion relating to research question three”.

Regarding research question four, the findings indicated that the EP could be of value to provide knowledge, mitigate risk, build resilience, provide external accountability and support the carrying out of research. A summary of how these findings relate to the prior literature base is presented in the earlier section “Summary of discussion relating to research question four”.

In response to research question five, the personal nature of the topic of staff wellbeing was noted, including the potential for project team staff to personalise project team activities and the potentially exposing situation of staff providing data on their personal wellbeing. Additionally, it was noted that the topic of staff wellbeing was important, resulting in the need to persist and the need to represent the wider staff in the project team. A summary of how these findings relate to the prior literature base is presented in the earlier section "Summary of discussion relating to research question five".

The most dominant contribution to knowledge from the present study is the potential of project team members personalising project activities and some measures were noted to be helpful to minimise the risk of this occurring.

CHAPTER SIX – REFLEXIVE ACCOUNT

In this chapter, I will outline and reflect on my dual participant-researcher role and how I explained this to the participants. I will then go on to reflect on how my role as trainee EP impacted on the project. This is presented in the following section:

- **My dual role.** This includes the subsections: How I explained my dual role; Some ways my involvement impacted.

6.1 MY DUAL ROLE

Reflections on my dual role are presented in the following sections:

- **How I explained my dual role.**
- **Some ways my involvement impacted.** This includes the subsections: My role in the early meetings; The part I played in driving the project forwards; My role in the latter part of the project.

  Reflexivity is the term used for explicit consideration of specific ways in which it is likely that the study was influenced by the researcher (Yardley, 2015, p. 250).

As outlined in Chapter Three – Methodology, I explicitly carried out two roles within the project: that of trainee EP, supporting the project in the first half of the research period; and that of researcher, studying the project. The role of the EP was explored in my analysis and thus to a degree, I was researching myself, as well as the school staff participants. I researched the project for a period of a year. Once a member of the team had taken on and established herself in the project leader role, I negotiated with her the ending of my involvement as trainee EP:

- **To enable the school to develop the independence to run the project without my involvement (as it was going to be necessary for me to step out either at the end of my research, or at the latest, at the end of my trainee EP placement).**
- **To enable me to move into the less conflicted position of being primarily the researcher.**

Whilst I negotiated that I would seek to remain in the researcher role from this point onwards, I told the project lead and team members that if they wanted to request support from me, they could do so. I did this to ease the transition from me being involved to me being in solely the role of researcher. As the school's trainee EP, the school were entitled to ask me for support, including in systemic work, so this felt appropriate. During the research, I was aware of the influence of my two roles, which will be the focus of this chapter.

6.1.1 How I explained my dual role

Sporadically throughout the project, I sought to explain my dual role to the participants. Each time that I recruited participants to my research, I delivered some information to them to provide them with an understanding of the nature of my research, my roles and the context of the project they were seeking to be involved in namely, that the project emerged from my invitation to the school to undertake the project. Here is the PowerPoint slide I delivered on my two roles:

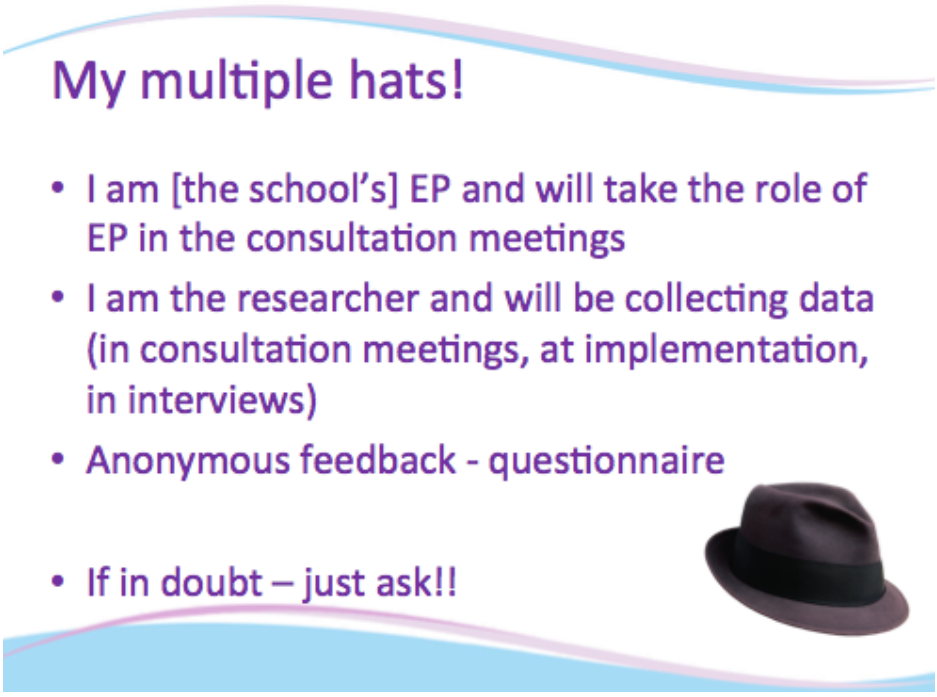

Figure 9: PowerPoint slide on my two roles

In correspondence with the bullet points above I explained that:

- **I would provide a facilitatory role in meetings (in the early stages of the project) and may input knowledge on research and psychological theory.**

- **I was seeking to study the process associated with the project and identify facilitators and barriers to the process.**
- **I would provide team members with an anonymous questionnaire after each meeting in which they could provide me with feedback on how my role was impacting on the project to support me to reflect on this and support the project appropriately.**

Unfortunately, I did not receive many responses to my anonymous questionnaire, as outlined in Chapter Three – Methodology. However, out of the few responses I did receive came the comment:

> *"Vicky's role needs to be clearer as it is not clear whether she is helping as a researcher or helping as part of the committee."*

This comment was made around halfway through the research period. It also happened at a time when I was arranging with the project lead that I would be stepping back from my role as trainee EP in the project. Having reiterated my role to the team a number of times earlier in the project, I had perhaps taken for granted that they understood the nature of my dual role and I had ceased to continue to clarify this. In response to this comment, I sent an email to all members of the team, clarifying my role, both what it had previously been, and the new researcher only position I was taking. The content of the email can be viewed at Appendix M. Later in the process I received feedback from one of my anonymous questionnaires, in relation to a meeting, stating my role had been:

> *"More observational."*

The participant also specified, in relation to my involvement:

> *"Can provide help if required. But have a clear understanding of her role as researcher."*

6.1.2 SOME WAYS MY INVOLVEMENT IMPACTED

6.1.2.1 My role in the early meetings

Within meetings, I sought to take a facilitatory role. This was also reflected back to me in a response to an anonymous questionnaire completed halfway through my involvement, where I asked participants to reflect on the process so far:

> *"Find Vicky very helpful and insightful. We could get lost in discussions and Vicky helps to bring the focus back."*

Techniques used to achieve this included paraphrasing and summarising, to help the team pinpoint their focus. These skills were used in my role as trainee EP and researcher, such as to support team members to determine factors that were important to them.

The following comment was also made in response to the anonymous questionnaire:

> *"Vicky is organised and has the information required so that we can have a discussion about the agenda points."*

Whilst this is seemingly a complimentary comment, I am unclear as to what "information" is being referred to and find the view of my role as information provider an interesting perspective. It may relate to my provision of information about Weare's (2015) model for developing school wellbeing practices, but without further details it is difficult to reflect further on this comment.

6.1.2.2 The part I played in driving the project forwards

In the early part of the project, I very much felt I was in a role of driving the project forward. Having presented the initial idea of the project to the school, this put me in a position of initiation. I had felt 1) that there was an expectation on the part of the initial team that I was in this role and 2) that if I stepped back from this role in the very early stages that the project may not have continued; no one had stepped into a leadership role in the first few meetings. I felt very uncomfortable in this role I found myself in, as I wanted the team members to take ownership and lead the project. For example, when the team discussed the idea of them using existing questionnaires, a team member asked for me to input into this:

"Team member: Is that something you could look into?... From the point of view of [questionnaires] that exist, research best practice, ones that might be recommended by doctorate researchers in this field?

Vicky: Yeah. I can have a little look.

Team member: Because we don't have that expertise in this area, it would be fairly difficult for us to find a – one that's recognised as good practice."

In my notes made subsequent to this exchange, I stated:

"I felt hesitant as would have preferred them to research it; I wanted them to have ownership and be empowered. I felt that the team looking to me for answers said something about their view of me (perhaps viewing me as being 'the expert', or maybe in some kind of leadership role in the project). I wanted them to be empowered enough to do things for themselves. However, as their trainee EP it is appropriate for me to provide input about research and it may just be my access to research that is the motivator for them asking for this."

Here I am seeking to understand their construction of my role, as well as feeling uncomfortable as to how they may perceive my role and over how to determine the role I should take. I also reflected in my notes how my response to a question that was asked of me by the team positioned me in 'expert role' and my critique of this:

"I realise now that I responded to her question, rather than throwing it out to other members of the team, which could have been a preferable course of action, as it would have been a more consultative and collaborative approach, rather than presenting myself as being in expert role."

As one of the team started to take on the role of project leader, there was a period where some transition occurred between team members looking to me to make things happen and looking to the emerging project leader. I played a part in supporting this transition:

"Team member: OK, and what about notice of the next meeting? Will you let us know that as well, Vicky? Will you coordinate that, or is [she] doing that? [She] took on that, didn't she?

Vicky: Let's get [her] to do that, yeah. That would be great."

There were also times when staff carried out timeline planning, where they sought to factor in my research timeframe and the impact of their pace on my research:

"Team member A: Can I just ask, Vicky, how long are you working on this project for?

Vicky: I'm with you until Easter next academic year. But you can carry on beyond my involvement…

Team member B: Yeah. Because I think we've got to be in a position whereby, if we know that you're going by Easter, we want at least one set of results that we've worked through, and you can go away knowing that in the next year this will be implemented."

This role of driving the project forward was also linked with my communicative nature:

"I think the communication has helped to drive us to where we've got to. You know, yourself: very communicative. And most of the team are as well."

6.1.2.3 My role in the latter part of the project

In the latter part of the project (from approximately halfway through my study), I negotiated with the project leader to largely relinquishing my role as trainee EP, to leave me solely in the role of researcher. As the school's trainee EP and also to support this transition, I told the project leader that I would still be available for her or the team to consult me if they required, but that the onus was on them to request this; I would not otherwise seek to intervene. I also informed team members of this. Subsequent to this, in meetings, I observed the interactions and noticed that the project leader took up my role of facilitating the meetings. Due to the relationship I had with them and my prior involvement, I sat with the team members in these meetings (rather than positioning myself outside of the group) and on occasion, individual team members spoke to me, although I did not converse with the team in any of their group discussions. The biggest involvement I had during this phase was with the project leader. Prior to and after team meetings we discussed progress (in the same way that we had when I had been involved as trainee EP) and the project leader used me as a sounding board in this respect. Thus, I still played a somewhat supportive role in the latter part of the research period. This gives further weight to the findings that highlight the need

for support (for example, in the Chapter Four – Findings section “The need for specific support” and in the Chapter Five – Discussion section “Support”).

6.2 CHAPTER SUMMARY

As can be seen above, there were issues to consider as a result of the roles I took in the project and I have provided reflection on some of the ways this may have impacted the project and my findings. Whilst this has added a layer of complexity to my research that has required reflection, this has also enabled me to take a close and shared view (with the participants) of the events and interactions that have occurred during the project, providing rich data on the project activities and process.

CHAPTER SEVEN – CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I will summarise the key findings. This is presented under the following headings:

- **Summary of key findings relating to each research question.** This includes the subsections: Research questions one and two; Research question three; Research question four; Research question five.
- **Summary of the present study's unique contribution to the knowledge base**

The findings were reached as a result of a rigorous process. The research process has been evaluated using Yardley's (2015) quality criteria to consider the validity of the present study. The evaluation is presented in Appendix N.

7.1 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS RELATING TO EACH RESEARCH QUESTION

Here follows a summary of how the present study answered the following research questions. This is presented in the following subsections:

- **Research questions one and two**
- **Research question three**
- **Research question four**
- **Research question five**

7.1.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS ONE AND TWO

Research question one – What facilitates the activities associated with the early stages of a staff wellbeing project being carried out in a secondary school from the perspective of school staff?

Research question two – What acts as barriers to the activities associated with the early stages of a staff wellbeing project being carried out in a secondary school from the perspective of school staff?

Here follows the key facilitators and barriers to the activities associated with a staff wellbeing project:

- **Staff roles impacted on the project and were both facilitators and barriers. Some of these findings were specific to the staff wellbeing focus of the project.**
- **Communication and absence of communication acted as a facilitator and barrier respectively and it was noted that communication with the wider staff body was of particular importance due to the staff wellbeing focus of the project.**
- **Having a representative project team was felt to be a facilitator and importance was placed on the team being representative of the wider staff due to the staff wellbeing project focus.**
- **Limited resources of time and support acted as barriers to the process. There were tenuous links between the need for support and the staff wellbeing focus.**
- **Forward drivers were largely facilitators, with the exception of pace, which was a barrier, both where it was perceived to be too slow or too fast. Some of the forward drivers related to the staff wellbeing focus of the project, such as the significance of persisting due to the importance of staff wellbeing.**
- **Structures were noted to be facilitators and were not noted to be specific to the staff wellbeing focus of the project.**

7.1.2 RESEARCH QUESTION THREE

Research question three – In the context of a secondary school carrying out a staff wellbeing project, how does the process impact on staff and project outcomes?

Here follows the key findings relating to research question three:

- **The process had a negative impact on some participants. This included a possible impact of working in the abstract field of wellbeing.**
- **There was a good wider school staff response to the questionnaire as a result of good communication and the alleviation of staff concerns that specifically related to the collecting of personal data.**
- **A positive impact on awareness of staff wellbeing and an increased narrative about staff wellbeing were indirect outcomes. Increased awareness and narrative about the focus area of change was not highlighted as being directly related to the staff wellbeing focus.**

7.1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION FOUR

Research question four – What is the role of the EP in supporting systemic change, in the context of a secondary school carrying out a staff wellbeing project?

The following highlights some ways that the EP could support the change process, as was noted in the present study:

- **Provide knowledge to fill any school gaps in knowledge needed.**
- **Mitigate risk, such as to staff morale, that may be associated with carrying out a staff wellbeing project.**
- **Build staff resilience to support staff to cope with the challenges of change.**
- **Provide external accountability to the project team.**
- **Support the carrying out of research.**

7.1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION FIVE

Research question five – What are the features of the process of change associated with a staff wellbeing project in a secondary school that are specific to the staff wellbeing focus of the project?

The following shows the key findings relating to the process of change that are specific to the staff wellbeing focus of the project:

- **The personal nature of staff wellbeing resulted in: the risk of project team members personalising[1] project activities; and risk to the wider staff if the anonymity of staff data was not respected.**
- **The importance of staff and their wellbeing placed extra weight on the need to persist and on the project team being representative of the wider staff team.**

[1] Directing project activities to address their own individual needs.

7.2 SUMMARY OF THE PRESENT STUDY'S UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

The most dominant finding that is a unique contribution to the existing knowledge relates to the risk of project team members personalising project activities. Including:

- **Value was placed on the project being led by a non-teaching member of staff due to teacher stressors increasing risk of a teacher project leader personalising project activities.**
- **The value of a small SLT presence on the project team, resulting in project team members acting professionally and not personalising project activities.**
- **As a result of collecting wider staff views on leadership practices, SLT project members minimised their participation in the project team, so as to not be seen to personalise findings relating to this data. This resulted in the project team being isolated from SLT support.**

In addition to these findings relating to the personalising of project activities, there were also some other findings that provide a unique contribution to the knowledge base:

- **Value placed on persisting with the project due to the importance of staff wellbeing.**
- **The ability to overcome the issue of not including the wider staff in the project from the start by providing lots of communications and by ensuring their first involvement enables them to contribute their view.**
- **The value of having EP support to reduce risks to staff morale that were potentially associated with the sensitive nature of the topic of staff wellbeing.**

7.3 SUMMARY

The most dominant findings specific to the staff wellbeing focus of the project related to the personal nature of staff wellbeing. This was of particular prominence in the present study due to the collecting of staff views relating to: their own wellbeing; and the impact of school practices on their wellbeing. Approaches that supported the project team to avoid the

personalising[1] of project activities were noted and the reassurance of staff regarding the anonymity of their data was important.

[1] Directing project activities to address their own individual needs.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A - WHAT IS MEANT BY 'WELLBEING'?

What is meant by 'wellbeing' is not easy to answer. It is not practicable to provide a full and extensive review of the literature here. However, it is worth providing some brief exploration of some of the key issues faced when attempting to define wellbeing. There are a range of views as to what wellbeing is and it could be argued that the reason for this is that wellbeing is individual or subjective. Indeed a subjective view of wellbeing is now recognised as having value and being worthy of being measured, such as in the Office for National Statistics' 'Measuring National Well-being' scheme (Matheson, 2011). There are a number of critiques regarding the measuring of subjective wellbeing (e.g. Austin, 2015; Crabtree, 2010; Nozick, 2012) and it is worth noting two of these. The first is that when focusing on subjective wellbeing, scholars often omit the consideration of social context, i.e. the relationships we have with others. These have been noted to have importance in relation to our wellbeing (Austin, 2015). The second critique is that the ambiguous nature of the word 'wellbeing' means that questions to participants that use the word 'wellbeing' are open to interpretation (purposefully, if the researcher is seeking to measure subjective wellbeing). This leaves the researcher who seeks to measure wellbeing with issues of validity.

There have also been attempts at determining wellbeing in objective ways, often based on material wealth, such as through national measurement of 'Gross Domestic Product' (Austin, 2015). Whilst this is an easier way to measure wellbeing, from a researcher perspective, Austin (2015) rightly critiques the measuring of wellbeing through the consideration of material wealth, for instance by highlighting the link between wealth and stress and obesity. Austin (2015) also refers to the 'capabilities approach' (Sen, 1999), which combines consideration of subjective and objective wellbeing. The capabilities approach also includes having the freedom to reach a state of positive wellbeing. This latter component is now included in the Care Act 2014; people receiving care are now determined to have the right to have wellbeing (The Stationary Office, 2014). This approach of stating the value of combining subjective and objective wellbeing and thus taking a more holistic view, could be argued to be an attempt to overcome some of the issues of taking one approach or the other, or perhaps this leaves the researcher with issues of critique relating to both approaches.

APPENDIX B - THE LINK BETWEEN WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH

Whilst it may be easy to form assumptions about the relationship between the range of terminology in the area of wellbeing and mental health, it is arguable that it is worth explicitly exploring some of those relationships. Keyes (2002) determines mental health to be a healthy state; having a collection of positive feelings combined with positive functioning. He highlights the components of subjective wellbeing (that are identified using wellbeing scales) as being 'symptoms' of (positive) mental health. Keyes (2002, p. 207) also links these notions with emotional health, indicating, through the use of multivariate analyses, that those who have an absence of (positive) mental health are significantly impaired in their psychosocial functioning "in terms of perceived emotional health". Emotional literacy, emotional competence and emotional intelligence are determined to be the polar position to an absence of (positive) mental health, i.e. tools for the effective management of emotions (Denham et al., 2009; Goleman, 1998; Sharp, 2000). Also of note is resilience, which has been determined to be part of emotional wellbeing (Ecclestone and Lewis, 2014). Thus the terminology in this field tends to position itself as polar, with wellbeing, positive mental health and emotional wellbeing (i.e. effective management of emotions, resilience and subjective wellbeing) being determined as opposite to an absence of positive mental health (poor mental health/mental health difficulties), impaired psychosocial functioning/emotional health. Keyes (2002) determines that these polar positions are at each end of a continuum.

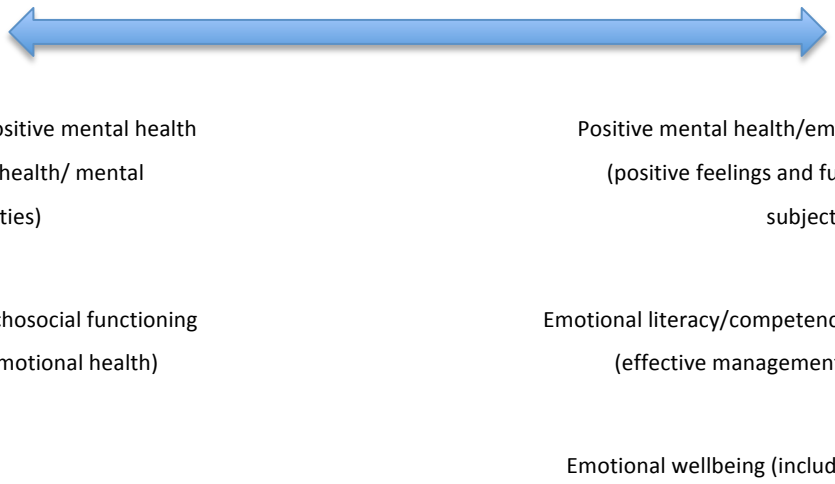

Figure 10: Polar terminology relating to wellbeing and mental health

Whilst it seems logical that focusing on developing wellbeing should help to prevent mental health difficulties, at least in some children, it is important to consider the evidence for this. Weare and Nind (2011), in reviewing the literature on mental health work in schools, found that many interventions had limited impact. However, interventions that were more effective incorporated aspects such as a focus on positive mental health and having a balance between universal and targeted methods. It was also determined that there is value in both working with young children and continuing support into the older age ranges, employing sustained approaches and working at whole school level. Weare (2015) highlights that in a true whole school approach, wellbeing is the business of everyone. Schools have a tendency towards being reactive in supporting mental health need (Vostanis et al., 2013), thus being targeted rather than universal in approach. Therefore the case is made for the need for a more universal whole school approach to be adopted (Weare, 2015) to provide the balance between targeted and whole school delivery. Public Health England (2014b), in reviewing the evidence, also highlight the link between being emotionally and socially competent (e.g. being emotionally literate) and a positive state of wellbeing. There is however critique of the movement towards promoting emotional wellbeing. Ecclestone (2011) highlights that this is an attempt to put a psychological spin on problems of social and educational nature. I would counter that I am not proposing that this is done at the expense of trying to improve social or educational issues or outcomes. Rather I view the promotion of wellbeing as essential where there is potential for there to be social and educational

issues. Such difficulties are likely to be easier to manage from a position of being emotionally literate.

APPENDIX C - METHODS USED FOR CARRYING OUT THE LITERATURE REVIEW

LITERATURE THAT UNDERPINNED THE PROJECT

In the early stages of determining my research I approached an Educational Psychologist regarding my area of interest, who recommended a number of papers for me to look at. Amongst them was Weare's (2015) 'guidance to schools' paper. Weare's (2015) writing highly resonated with me, presenting as an accessible model for developing school wellbeing. This paper underpinned my research idea (to study the implementation of a programme aimed to improve wellbeing) and was used as a starting point with the project team to provide an impetus for the school's wellbeing project.

QUESTIONS THE LITERATURE REVIEW SOUGHT TO ADDRESS

1. What are some of the key underpinning theories and models associated with change in schools?
2. What is known about implementation and the process of change that takes place when effecting change in schools?
3. What is known about implementation and the process of change that takes place when implementing practices that seek to promote staff wellbeing in organisations?
4. What can the literature tell us about Educational Psychologists supporting organisational level change using a consultative approach?

RATIONALE FOR DATABASES USED

Database	**Rationale for choice of database**
British Education Index	To capture British educational literature
Educational Administration Extracts	To capture papers on the organisation of schools.
Web of Science	To enable a search of a broad range of social science literature.
EThOS	To capture doctoral theses relating to this area of study.

Table 4: Rationale for databases used

EXCLUSION AND INCLUSION CRITERIA

- With the exception of literature outlining relevant theories and models, I limited my search to research only.
- I only drew on UK based research to ensure findings were relevant. For example, research conducted in other countries where there are cultural differences and different educational systems may pose limits (Schwab-Stone et al., 2001), such as to the transferability of findings (Wigelsworth et al., 2012).
- I limited my search criteria to literature from the year 2000 onwards to ensure findings drawn on were up to date and relevant to present day. The exception to this was consideration of some underpinning theories and models that research draws on.
- All papers were screened to determine whether findings answered any of the questions that my literature review sought to address (as presented above). Only papers answering these questions were drawn on to ensure all were directly relevant to the subject area studied.
- In the broader school change literature, those that were most relevant were selected.
- Papers that I did not have access to through the University of Bristol library system were removed from search findings.

SEARCHES AND SEARCH TERMS

All searches, including search terms used, were documented and can be viewed in Appendix D. All search terms used were combined to seek to identify studies closest to the area of study. In the papers identified using the above methodology, I followed the reference lists and identified papers that cited the papers (using Web of Science and Google Scholar) that also provided answers to the questions guiding my literature review and fitted within my search criteria.

METHODS USED TO ASSIST IN THE REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As a starting point for taking an overview of the literature found, I adopted Ridley's (2012) table for comparing literature sources (recording: author(s) and year of publication; aims/research questions; study location; identity and size of sample; data collection methods; and key findings). I adapted the table to additionally collect the methodological

approach taken (where explicitly stated) to also enable me to also consider this when reviewing the range of literature found.

APPENDIX D – LITERATURE SEARCHES CARRIED OUT

After some experimentation with search terms, to establish which search terms elicited relevant papers, I established use of the following collection of search terms:

Collection of search terms:	
	Implement* OR change* OR process* OR reform* OR innovat*
AND	Staff OR adult* OR teacher*
AND	Well* OR mental OR emotion* OR psychological
AND	Support OR prevent* OR promot*
AND	Program* OR practice*
AND	"Secondary school*" OR "comprehensive school*" OR "high school*" OR academ* OR setting* OR organi?ation* OR school* OR "Higher education" OR Universit* OR College* OR nurser*
AND	UK OR "United Kingdom" OR England OR English OR Wales OR Welsh OR Scotland OR Scottish OR "Northern Ireland" OR "Northern Irish" OR "Great Britain" OR British

Table 5: Collection of search terms used

The above search was carried out as follows. I reran the searches in October 2019 to check whether any new papers had been published that were directly relevant to the research area:

Carried out in:	**Date search carried out:**	**Time frame:**	**Results found in English:**	**Screened and reduced to:**
British Education Index	21/2/18	January 2000 – February 2018	380	4
British Education Index	14/10/19	February 2018 – October 2019	139	1
Educational Administration Extracts	23/2/18	January 2000 – February 2018	216	2
Educational Administration Extracts	14/10/19	February 2018 – October 2019	34	1
EThOS	23/2/18	N/A	0	0
EThOS	14/10/19	N/A	0	0
Web of Science	12/3/18	2000-2018	747	1 1
Web of Science	14/10/19	2018-2019	268	7

Table 6: Searches carried out using collection of terms in table 5

The above search provided a range of papers, with some relating to the area of staff wellbeing and some being about change focusing on other developments. I also wanted to

try a simpler search to ensure I had sufficiently considered the range of literature on change in secondary schools. Thus I carried out the following search:

Collection of search terms:	
	Organi#ational change
AND	Secondary school

Table 7: Search terms used to find literature on organisational change in secondary schools

Carried out in:	**Date search carried out:**	**Results found for 2000 – 2018 in English:**	**Screened and reduced to:**
British Education Index	30/6/18	65	13
Educational Administration Extracts	30/6/18	88	7
EThOS	30/6/18	0	0
Web of Science	2/7/18	131	1

Table 8: Searches carried out using collection of terms in table 7

For the aspect of my literature review considering Educational Psychologists working consultatively, it was necessary to carry out the following search:

Collection of search terms:	
	"Educational psycholog*"
AND	Consultat*

Table 9: Search terms used to find literature on educational psychologists using consultation

Carried out in:	**Date search carried out:**	**Results found for 2000 – 2018 in English:**	**Screened and reduced to:**
British Education Index	7/7/18	76	8
Educational Administration Extracts	7/7/18	36	5
EThOS	7/7/18	0	0
Web of Science	7/7/18	31	4

Table 10: Searches carried out using collection of terms in table 9

I also checked whether combining all search terms used in the initial search yielded any results, so I carried out the following search (I kept the use of the word "OR" in the section determining setting and country as I wanted results that included any of those settings and countries, rather than all of them):

Collection of search terms:	
	Implement* AND change* AND process* AND reform* AND innovat*
AND	Staff AND adult* AND teacher*
AND	Well* AND mental AND emotion* AND psychological
AND	Support AND prevent* AND promot*
AND	Program* AND practice*
AND	“Secondary school*” OR “comprehensive school*” OR “high school*” OR academ* OR setting* OR organi?ation* OR school* OR “Higher education” OR Universit* OR College* OR nurser*
AND	UK OR “United Kingdom” OR England OR English OR Wales OR Welsh OR Scotland OR Scottish OR “Northern Ireland” OR “Northern Irish” OR “Great Britain” OR British

Table 11: Search terms combined

Carried out in:	**Date search carried out:**	**Results found for 2000 – 2018 in English:**	**Screened and reduced to:**
British Education Index	11/4/18	0	0
Educational Administration Extracts	11/4/18	0	0
EThOS	11/4/18	0	0
Web of Science	11/4/18	0	0

Table 12: Searches carried out using combined search terms from table 11

APPENDIX E - THE TRAINEE EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST ROLE IN THE PROJECT STUDIED

When initiating the project, in my role as trainee EP, I suggested that the change process be underpinned by Beaver's (2011, p. 17) "plan-do-review" framework, for use in consultative EP practice. I chose and presented this model to the team to provide a straightforward structure within which to work (a framework I typically use). Within the 'plan' aspect of this framework is space for information gathering and consideration of theoretical models, such as the Weare (2015) guidance for developing approaches to support wellbeing. The 'do' aspect of the model is the implementation of practices/intervention(s), based on actions agreed and is a focal point of this study. The 'review' component, also key to this study, provides the opportunity to consider how implementation went.

As the school's assigned trainee EP, I supported the project team meetings, thus making me a participant in the 'plan' and 'review' parts of the 'plan-do-review' process. Whilst I had facilitation involvement, the determining of a focus, the decision-making and the implementation of the changes were all led by the school staff involved. That is not to deny my role or influence. However, it has been argued that the researcher will always influence behaviour, even when solely observing (Mills and Morton, 2013; Pole and Morrison, 2003). Thus, rather than seeking to address this unavoidable situation, this is managed by researchers through reflexivity; see Chapter Six – Reflexive Account. By explicitly acknowledging my role to myself, my participants and the reader of this dissertation, I am both embracing this issue and demonstrating transparency (Smith, 2003). After each meeting I sent team members a link to an anonymous questionnaire that they could complete to enable them to provide me with feedback on my involvement, to assist me to critique my role in the project.

The key focus of my study was to explore the activities and processes associated with a staff wellbeing project. My involvement in the consultation aspect of the project positioned me with two roles; that of trainee EP and researcher. However, as I was studying implementation, an aspect of the project in which I had no involvement, my role was somewhat removed from the focus area of the study. Anonymous feedback and my own journaling enabled me to consider how my role may have impacted implementation. Later in the process I realised an impact of my involvement at the start of the project, where I provided the project with some drive. I reflect on this in Chapter Six – Reflexive Account.

Alternative design options could have been to find another EP to initiate the process or find an existing project to study that was of a similar nature and in its early phase of existence. It seemed unlikely that an EP that was not as invested in the project as I was (due to my need to carry out the research) would have the time or sufficient motivation, in the context of other time allocation and service priorities. At the time of recruitment there were no national initiatives relating to developing school wellbeing. Nor were there local initiatives in the service in which I was on my EP training placement. Thus it felt like it might have been difficult to find an appropriate project to study in the time confines of my research period, particularly as I sought to collect data for as long as possible due to the time it takes to effect change. At the time of recruiting the school, I used questioning with the gatekeeper to confirm that she was genuinely motivated for the school to carry out the project.

APPENDIX F – EXAMPLE TOPIC GUIDE

The following topic guide was used for the last round of interviews.

- the facilitators and why/how
- the barriers and why/how
- what would you do differently if you were to do it over again?

Viewing the project to date as the early phase of a sustained process to supporting staff wellbeing, what were the facilitators/barriers/things you would do differently?

Specific aspects of the project for exploration:

Meetings

The people involved

Deciding to have a questionnaire

Development of the questionnaire

Getting the school community to engage in the questionnaire

Analysis of the questionnaire

Thoughts about moving forward from here

Is the project going to continue? If so, what is enabling that to happen? If not, why not, what went wrong? What would need to happen to sustain it?

How does the wider staff team view the project?

If another school were to enter into setting up and running a project like this, what advice would you give to them?

Does the process this project has gone through remind you of any other process you've experienced or know of? (analogy)

APPENDIX G - INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

The recording of this interview is provided on the accompanying disc.

I = Interviewer

A = Interviewee

I: I know it's kind of early days, so it's slightly strange to interview, or kind of feels like it a little bit to me, because it's not how I've done research before, I normally come in later. But really, because of the end of term, and us going off on the summer, I kind of wanted to capture people's thoughts about what we've done so far, where they feel we're at, and that kind of thing, really.

A: OK.

I: So thank you for taking part so far

A: That's ok

I: and all of that. How does what we've done so far match with what you expected?

A: I think it's matched what I've expected, but I think the process has been slower than I'd expected. I suppose I thought we would have that initial meeting, get the ideas, and then get going. And for me it's been procedural. I know you've had certain things you've needed to check at school – at your university, sorry – and that's fine, absolutely fine. And we've had, you know, the idea of expanding the team, that took time.

So for me, it is what I've expected, but I would have expected us to be further down a more practical road by now, than we are. So that's literally, I suppose, the only thing that is not

I: Yeah, OK, that's interesting. Are you used to hitting the ground running? Is that kind of how things have happened here?

A: Yeah. I suppose in my role, it's kind of like, *Right, let's make a decision, form a committee,* and more often than not I'm one of the leads on the committee, and it's kind of, *Right, let's plough on, and let's get going.* Because we run to term times, you know, you kind of know that you've got six weeks, a window to get something up and running, and that tends to be –

Strategic-wise, which this is, I suppose, more overarching and more strategic than anything else, I would say that we look quite far into the distance, but by the time we get down to committee level, that's when decisions have been made to do something. So I probably feel slightly, a bit more disenfranchised from the project than I did initially. Just because I'm feeling that it's slow. For me.

I: Yeah. I know there's been the factor of having to check out – like I've had to check out the ethics side of things with the university.

A: That's right, yeah. I understand that.

I: Yeah. Is there any other things that you think have made it slow, the way it is, that

A: I suppose, the bigger the group, the harder it is to get everyone to be round one table, and together. I know, for example, [name removed] and I missed the last meeting, because we had prior engagements, and so on.

I: Sure.

A: So, potentially, I think we're going to struggle to get everyone round at the same time. And that, again, might lead to a little bit more of a fractured group feel. There will be the core people who are very keen, and I mean [name removed], for example, is extremely keen, and brilliant, you know. The things she sent through this morning, I had a very quick look at: fab. [name removed]: very, very keen, you know. Potentially different demands on their time than other people in the group, and therefore are – you know, that's fine, if they're kind of happy to sort of drive that side of things. Fine. But for me, I'm finding that my immediate time is taken up with my day job, and this comes round, and, you know, it's like, *Oh right, I've got this meeting coming up. Right, OK, get my head back into what that's about.*

I: Sure, yeah, absolutely. Great. What do you hope is going to happen?

A: What I would say is some discernible action. That's kind of what I – I think we've taken a while, and quite rightly so, to decide on where we see our purpose, and where we want this research going, and I think that's been valid. But I would like to sort of, I suppose, from the back of the meeting today, have some sort of time-line, plan, that I – and maybe that's the way I work – that I can hang my sort of

I: I agree, yeah.

A: You know: *Right, that's where we're expecting to be by this stage. That's where we're expecting to be by that stage.*

I: I think it's helpful to have those sorts of deadlines anyway, for all of us, isn't it, when we're managing different priorities.

A: Yes. This is not what our focus is every single day. If this was the only job I was doing, that would be different, you know.

I: Of course. Absolutely.

A: So I think having those key time points to re-focus you in the short-term is good, rather than having the vague, long-term hope that this is where we'll end up getting, like some sort of resolution on staff, etc.

I: OK, lovely. In terms of what we're going to implement, so obviously we're looking at the questionnaire at the moment, and I believe there's a view, once the questionnaire's been done, to consider implementation of something else, maybe, depending on the outcome of the questionnaire. So, for either of those aspects – or both – what do you think the outcomes will be?

A: Well, first and foremost I think we do need to establish, as a group, what we would like those outcomes to be. Because any time that you go to consultation with staff, you have to then be...not just seen to act on it, you have to do something with the information you get. Because... you know, I don't want to use the sort of analogy of, that you go out to consultation, but you've already got your plan what you're going to do anyway. And therefore it actually will lower morale. So I think it's really important that we probably don't prejudge what we're going to do, until we actually get the results from our – I think just the

premise that we will look at the results, and then make our plans from that. I think if we go in there with a plan of, *Well this is probably what we're going to do,* then we're in danger of putting a skew, or a bias, or some sort of element on our research. So I would want to wait for the action from the research, until we got the results.

I: Yeah. Do you have a hunch of what you think might come out of the questionnaire?

A: I think...I think – as we probably identified before – I think we might be able to identify different levels of morale, stress, happiness, etc. within different groups. So I think we might find some sort of grouping that might

I: Expecting some patterns.

A: Patterns, tren- and we might...therefore that would lead us down one way of action. I think timing of when we do it will be quite important. If we were to do it now, it would be very different results than if we were to do it in September. So I think we will need to bear that in mind, and maybe also bear in mind that we may need to re-test as well, on the back of whatever action is taken.

But as far as a hunch on, I think my hunch is skewed, again, by how I'm feeling now, and how I know staff are feeling now. So I think probably not the best time to predict.

I: No. No, absolutely. It's a funny time of year.

A: Yeah. It is.

I: End of school year.

A: Everyone's kind of like – if you ask them next Friday, they'll all be ecstatic! Shattered, but ecstatic. If you ask them today, they're thinking, *I've got sports day coming up, I've got this coming up*

I: Yeah, absolutely. Do you feel in the process that your voice has been heard, so far?

A: Yeah, I think so. I think, yeah, definitely. I think it has been inclusive, and, I haven't been to a meeting with the new people involved, so that I can't comment on. But the meetings and the process I have been to: yeah, no problem.

I: Great. What's worked for you and not worked for you, in what we've done so far?

A: The form of communication, that's fine. Worked for me. Email: best way. And I think setting up the little group, that's fine. So that's worked. After school meeting slot, that generally works. If I know significantly in advance when it is going to be, that's fine. And the people that have been on the committee, that's got – no problems with any of that, but obviously, as I said, I haven't been to a meeting yet where the wider group is, so I don't know how the dynamics of the group will have changed. So that, for me, probably hasn't worked, in that I couldn't make that initial meeting, so I am a bit behind the process now, if you like. Although I've had email contact with people, and I see them around school. So maybe that issue.

And, yeah, and probably pace has probably not worked quite as well for me.

I: Yeah. I mean I'm guessing the last meeting that you couldn't make was around your own, other priorities.

A: Yeah.

I: I mean is there any way that we could have avoided that, or

A: I don't think so. I think it was something, I'm trying to even remember where I was. I think I was in London, or something like that. I think it's just having that schedule ahead of time, isn't it. And I think, I know we did try to do that, but putting – I mean we've done our meeting cycle for next year already. So, you know, if we're going to have these meetings, they can be scheduled in, and that could be someone's role, you know.

I: And we could do that, couldn't we, schedule quite a long way, you know, into next year. I'm more than happy doing that.

A: Yeah. And I think that, that, then, is probably one way round it.

I: Yeah. Great. Excellent. What do you think has helped us get where we've got to?

A: I think the drive to do something about how we see, and what goes on with regard to staff. I think that – the motivation is there, from the key people that started it initially. I think that is important. I think the communication has helped to drive us to where we've got to.

You know, yourself: very communicative. And most of the team are as well. And I think probably just our sort of collective will, to help and do something, I think that has probably helped drive where we are at the moment, yeah.

I: In terms of things that have prevented that, I know we've talked already about the barriers in terms of pace. Are there any other aspects, do you think, that we've not covered, around what's not helped us?

A: From my own point of view then, potentially it will be that we've now added people to the group. So you kind of had to take another, starting people from the bottom again, start building their learning curve up, and so we're all on the same page. So I would have said that that was another element that slowed it down. And I understand why we went that way.

So probably that, which won't happen again. And, yeah, that's probably it, really.

I: Yeah, OK. Is there anything missing, that we've not covered already, ideas for the group, for the future of the project?

A: Er, no, I don't think so. I think, I think the project will evolve when more actual action round the wellbeing has taken place. I think we've spent a long time talking about the process, the planning, what it is, and so on and so forth, and I think the action will now help – help, or could actually throw up issues that we weren't expecting, as well.

I: Sure.

A: So I think that could be something that we may find problematic, moving forward. For example, if everyone talks about pay.

I: Yeah. Yes!

A: You know, you can't solve that. And that is something, so, you know, I think – and the messages we'd have to put out about that, mustn't be defensive. And so I think, you know, I think we're going to have to tread carefully, moving forward. But we must move forward, because-

I: In terms of the wider school community.

A: Yes.

I: Yeah.

A: Yeah. And I think at the moment, they don't know what we're doing. So maybe communicating what we're doing is going to be – you know, what message do we want to put out there as to what we're doing? Because we don't want to say something that they're suddenly going to expect, *well we're now responsible for staff morale.* Well no, you're responsible for your own morale, you know, but we're looking at a feeling of group wellbeing and so on, and individual wellbeing is, you know, we've got to think about that.

So I think we need to be careful about the messages, and how we communicate what, as a group, we're doing. Because they know we're doing something, because we looked for recruits.

I: Yeah.

A: So I think that probably hasn't been addressed. And when do we address that? I know you spoke to the staff, but that was more in a recruitment of interested individuals.

I: Absolutely, yeah. It's not been communicated, nothing else has been communicated. I was kind of aware of that myself.

Great. Is there anything else you want to add to that?

A: No, I think that's probably it so far. See how we go for tonight.

I: We're good for time, so that's great. Lovely. Bring your ideas along, that's all I can say, really.

A: Yeah, perfect. OK.

I: Thank you very much.

APPENDIX H - CODING EXAMPLE

An example of coding associated with the subtheme “Perspectives of a powerful leadership”

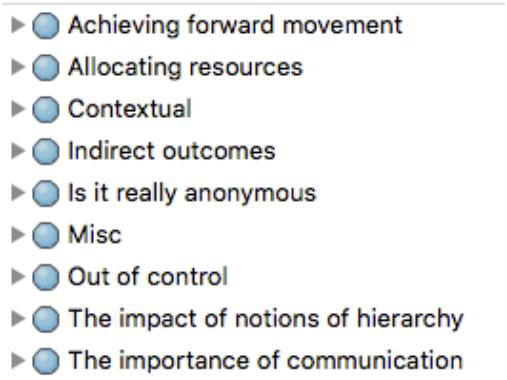

Figure 11: Coding - overarching themes

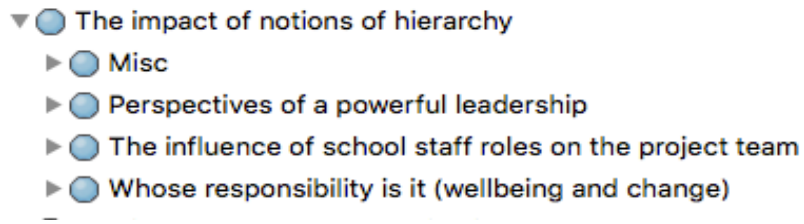

Figure 12: Coding - subthemes of “The impact of notions of hierarchy”

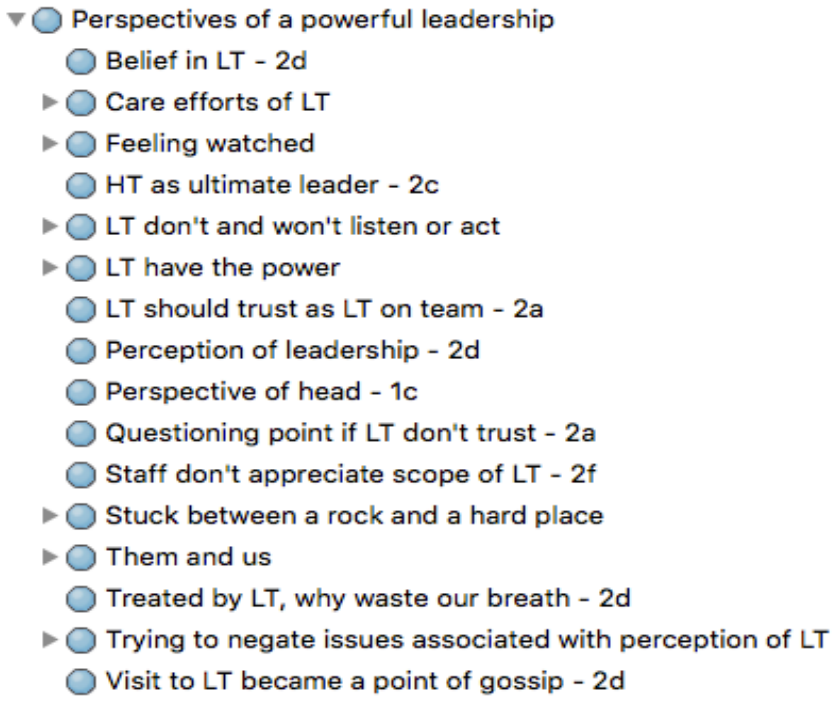

Figure 13: Codes within the subtheme “Perspectives of a powerful leadership

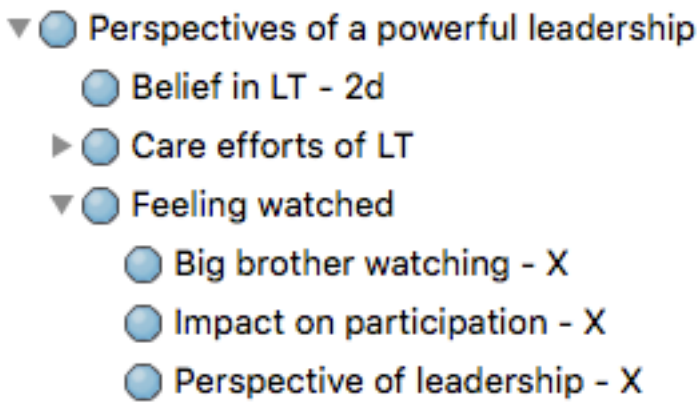

Figure 14: An example of codes within the subtheme “Perspectives of a powerful leadership

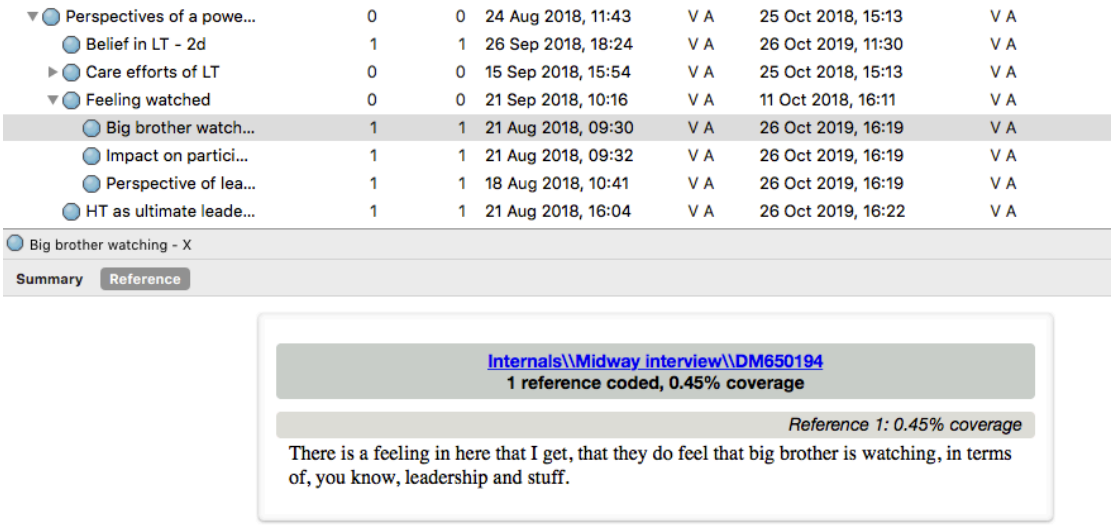

Figure 15: An example of a piece of data associated with a code

APPENDIX I - AN EXAMPLE OF THE IDENTIFYING AND NAMING OF A THEME

THE IDENTIFYING AND NAMING OF THE THEME "THE IMPACT OF NOTIONS OF HIERARCHY"

The following focuses on the process associated with the development of the theme "The impact of notions of hierarchy", including the associated subthemes. Reference will be made to specific stages and figures presented in the following Appendix "Thematic Analysis Process". In stage 1 of my analysis process, having familiarised myself with the data and noted the key meanings and first patterns that I observed, I identified there were perspectives of leadership voiced that specifically related to school staff hierarchies. I therefore produced an initial theme called "Perspectives of leadership" with the word "Hierarchy" attached to this to represent the hierarchical nature of this theme. I also recognised links with data that I grouped in a subtheme "Getting the message right" and posed a potential link with an initial theme "Who is responsible?" These early ideas are presented in figure 16 in the next Appendix.

The above was used as a starting point. I next coded all of the data and developed the initial organisation of themes and subthemes. At this stage I had top-level themes of "Hierarchy" and "Whose responsibility is it?" (as can be seen in figure 17) whilst I placed "Perspectives of leadership" as a subtheme of "Hierarchy" due to the hierarchical nature of the perspectives of leadership. I had also determined two other subthemes "Different school roles within the team" (which included data that related to the roles of different school staff who were in the team) and "Driven from below" (which was data outlining the role of non-SLT staff in driving the project forward). At this stage I had grouped the themes, with some being grouped as being specific to the process of change, whilst others related to how participants responded to the process of change (with the themes "Hierarchy" and "Whose responsibility is it?" relating to how the process of change was responded to). This can also be seen in figure 17.

In further considering the nature of the data in the theme "Hierarchy" I realised that this was not a response to the process of change. The hierarchical nature of the staff team and how this was perceived by participants related to pre-existing hierarchies and perspectives in the school. This theme also included data about how the hierarchies and perspectives of

these interacted with the project. The pre-existing hierarchies were acknowledged by the link that was made with the theme "Context", as can be seen in figures 18 and 19. At this stage the subtheme "Whose responsibility is it?" was positioned as a subtheme of the theme "Responding" as the data raised the question as to who should respond (in terms of effecting change and having responsibility for staff wellbeing). However, I did recognise that this had some relationship to the theme "Hierarchy", which is reflected in figure 19.

The next change I made regarding the organisation of themes was sizeable. I had connected a number of themes to a box labelled "Components of the process of change" (as presented in figure 20). However, the box "Components of the process of change" reflected a research question, rather than having been derived from the process of analysis. The realisation of this error resulted in the need to remove the box "Components of the process of change". I also realised that the subtheme "Whose responsibility it is?" was more closely aligned to the theme "Hierarchy" than the theme "Responding". Further, I identified that there were two components considered, in relation to responsibility – wellbeing and change. At this stage I reflected this in the name of this subtheme. I later removed the "wellbeing and change" aspect of the subtheme name, for purposes of simplicity, but these two components are drawn out in the presentation of these findings in Chapter Four - Findings. Data in the other two subthemes of the theme "Responding" related to a range of subthemes. For example, the subtheme "Affective" was a collection of emotional responses to aspects of the project. The distribution of the various emotional responses to the items they related to provided richer findings in each subtheme that these were relocated to. I also sought to consider the theme name, to make it more specific to the data than the name "Hierarchy". In consideration of the data I devised the name "The impact of notions of hierarchy" as the data on hierarchical issues also considered how this impacted (both in the school in general and on the project). The resulting groupings and adjustments to the theme and subtheme names can be viewed at figure 21.

I next looked at all of the data within each subtheme very closely, to ensure all the themes and subthemes were appropriately named. In carrying out this process I realised that the subtheme "Driven from below" only contained a very small amount of data and was suitably situated within the subtheme "The influence of school staff roles on the project team". In looking at the data in the subtheme "Perspectives of leadership" more closely, I observed that the data related to the power associated with the role of leadership staff. I changed the name of the subtheme to reflect this, calling it "Perspectives of a powerful leadership".

Additionally, there had been some data in this subtheme about the anonymity of the project questionnaire. On closer inspection I discovered that there was only a tenuous link between the data on anonymity and the views about leadership and I therefore moved this group of data out of this subtheme to forge a separate theme in its own right. This seemed appropriate, as the issue of anonymity was identified as an important factor for the team to respond to. When looking at the data in the subtheme "Different school roles within the team" I recognised that the staff roles had influence on the project team and therefore changed the name of the subtheme to reflect this – "The influence of school staff roles on the project team". These changes are reflected in figure 22. I later realised that the school staff roles influenced the project as a whole, not just the project team and therefore the name of this subtheme was changed to reflect this, as presented in figure 25.

APPENDIX J – THEMATIC ANALYSIS PROCESS

Here follows an outline of the process I followed when carrying out a thematic analysis of my data. Stages represent the stages of my analysis process. “Phases” relate to Braun and Clarke's (2018) phases:

Stage and phase:	**What I did:**
Stage 1 (phase 1)	Braun and Clarke (2018) highlight that this phase focuses on the researcher becoming familiar with the data. I had collected the data myself, so this provided a basis to build on. To become more familiar with the data I read through my dataset twice whilst listening to the audio recordings. During this process I checked the transcripts for accuracy and made a small number of edits. I also made notes about the data, including noting key meanings and identifying patterns within and between data items. I sketched out a few ideas about key themes and how these may relate to each other, see figure 16 below this table for the resulting thematic map.
Stage 2 (phase 2)	I systematically worked through all of the data applying codes to segments of data, drawing out different components from the views of the participants and capturing interesting ideas.
Stage 3 (phase 3)	All codes were grouped into generated themes (Braun and Clarke, 2018) and as my process of sorting went on I was able to group themes and determine a hierarchy of themes and subthemes. Towards the end of phase 3 I took each of the overarching themes, placed them on sticky notes and spent some time arranging them in relation to each other (see figure 17 below), to forge an initial thematic map of the top level themes.
Stage 4	I reviewed all data in the themes and sub-themes, sometimes referring back to data items to clarify the context in which the data was delivered. Where the context felt important I would adjust the amount of data in

(phase 4)	the coded item to include the relevant contextual information. I developed the groupings in the themes and sub-themes to ensure all data was appropriately organised. This included the incorporation of some new subthemes. Whilst carrying out this process I reflected on the 'boundaries' of the themes i.e. what was appropriate to include and exclude, whether the theme was coherent and whether there was sufficient data to support a theme (Braun and Clarke, 2012). I then revisited my whole dataset, coding additional data that had previously been overlooked and seeking to check that the "themes reflect meaning across the whole dataset". Finally I revisited the themes, checking they related to my research questions (Braun et al., 2014, p. 104). Figure 18 shows my top level of themes and figure 19 shows my themes and subthemes, determined at this stage of analysis.
Stage 5 (phases 4 and 5)	In seeking to define my themes and carrying out further study into the process of conducting thematic analysis, I discovered that I had made some errors in my analysis at stage 4. Thus, despite having moved on to phase 5 activities (i.e. having started the process of defining my themes), I spent some time making some phase 4 level adjustments to my analysis. Braun et al. (2014) highlight that thematic analysis is not necessarily purely linear and that the process is more fluid than their model suggests, supporting the flexibility I required to move between these two phases. I had been feeling some discomfort about the appropriateness of the theme 'the trials and tribulations of surveying school staff' in relation to my research questions. In the process of defining my themes I realised that much of the data grouped in this theme also fitted within other themes and thus I made adjustments accordingly (the resulting themes and subthemes can be seen at figure 20 below). Further, in viewing Braun and Clarke's (2018) lecture on thematic analysis, I learnt about the mistake of putting all data relating to a particular topic in one theme in instances where this does not lead to the forming of a unified central idea. As a result of this I reviewed all of my themes and subthemes to seek to correct such errors in my analysis. This resulted in some substantial changes. During this process I also devised more accurate

	names for the themes and subthemes (a phase 5 part of the process). The resulting themes and subthemes can be viewed at figure 21. I then went through a process of organising the data within the themes and subthemes to produce a story of my findings. As I did this I started to produce some narrative around the data. During this process, when working on the subtheme "Perspectives of leadership", which I renamed "Perspectives of a powerful leadership", I addressed a concern that I had been considering relating to a section of this subtheme that focused on concerns of anonymity. This section on anonymity had dominance of its own. Also, upon closer inspection of the collection of data for this section, I realised that the link between this and the perspectives of leadership was only a tenuous link. Due to this and the weight of the data relating to anonymity, I decided to lift this section out to form a separate theme. During this process of organising my data within each theme/subtheme, I also ensured that I documented relationships that subthemes and themes had with each other. A thematic map showing the changes indicated above and showing which themes/subthemes are linked can be viewed at figure 22. Figure 23 indicates my early thinking of how the themes/subthemes related to each other. Figures 24 and 25 show the development of my thinking that occurred over time in relation to how the themes/subthemes related to each other. A simpler perspective of this is presented at figure 26, where only the top-level themes are shown. Fuller explanations of the relationships are presented in figure 27.
Stage 6 (predominantly phase 5 and 6, with a brief return to phase 4 analysis)	Having situated data into a document in a proposed order and produced some initial narrative around the data, I then returned to this writing, building on the narrative and analysis. I indicated what was important about the data and why, what the story of each theme was and how the stories fitted into the overall broader messages that I had determined as a result of the analysis process. I also ensured I had included my key arguments in relation to my research questions. This work incorporated phase 5 and 6 practices from Braun and Clarke's (2006) method of

	thematic analysis. During this process some final adjustments were made to the arrangement of themes and subthemes. I returned to a section within the subtheme “Qualities of the team” that was about skills of the team. On return to this section I realised it did not have one coherent message and instead explored a number of skills of the team. This also did not relate closely enough to the other section of this subtheme about the importance of having a representative team. I realised that some of the data in the skills section related to other subthemes. Therefore, I moved the relevant data over to the other subthemes, removed the section on the skills of the team and adjusted the section “The need for a representative team” to be a subtheme, rather than a section of a subtheme. This work was phase 4 work from Braun and Clarke's (2006) method. During this latter process I increased focus on findings that were specific to the topic of the school’s project (staff wellbeing). I have indicated on my thematic maps (highlighted in blue) the themes and subthemes within which there were such findings – see figures 28 and 29. In the process of editing the findings chapter, I refined the subtheme “Structures”, which impacted on the relationship with the subtheme “No allocated time”. I also cut the subtheme “Having a voice”. Key aspects impacting staff voice are explored in the subtheme “The influence of school staff roles on the project”, where the hierarchical position of staff role is highlighted as impacting on staff voice in the team. The overlap between these two subthemes led me to make the decision to remove the subtheme “Having a voice”. Further, early in the research process I had specifically asked participants whether they felt they had a voice and therefore the subtheme “Having a voice” was derived in response to my specific questioning, over and above what was important to participants. The final versions of thematic maps, including the relationships between themes and subthemes can be viewed at figures 30 and 31.

	Later, in the final process of refining the findings chapter, I made a small number of edits to the analysis. The final thematic map can be viewed at figure 32. Figure 33 provides an up to date thematic map with explanations of the relationships between the themes and subthemes.

Table 13: The analysis process

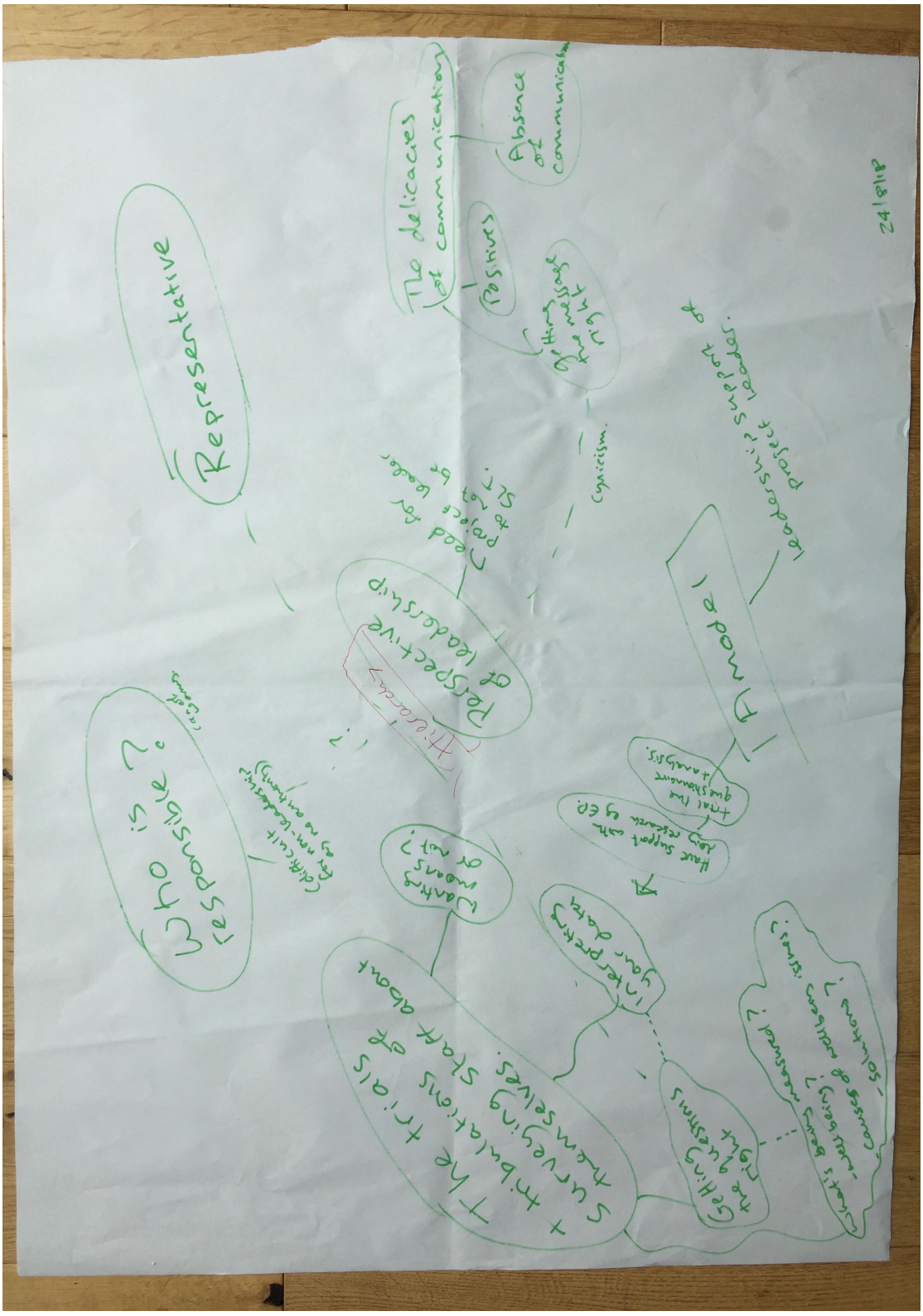

Figure 16: Thematic map produced during stage 1 of analysis

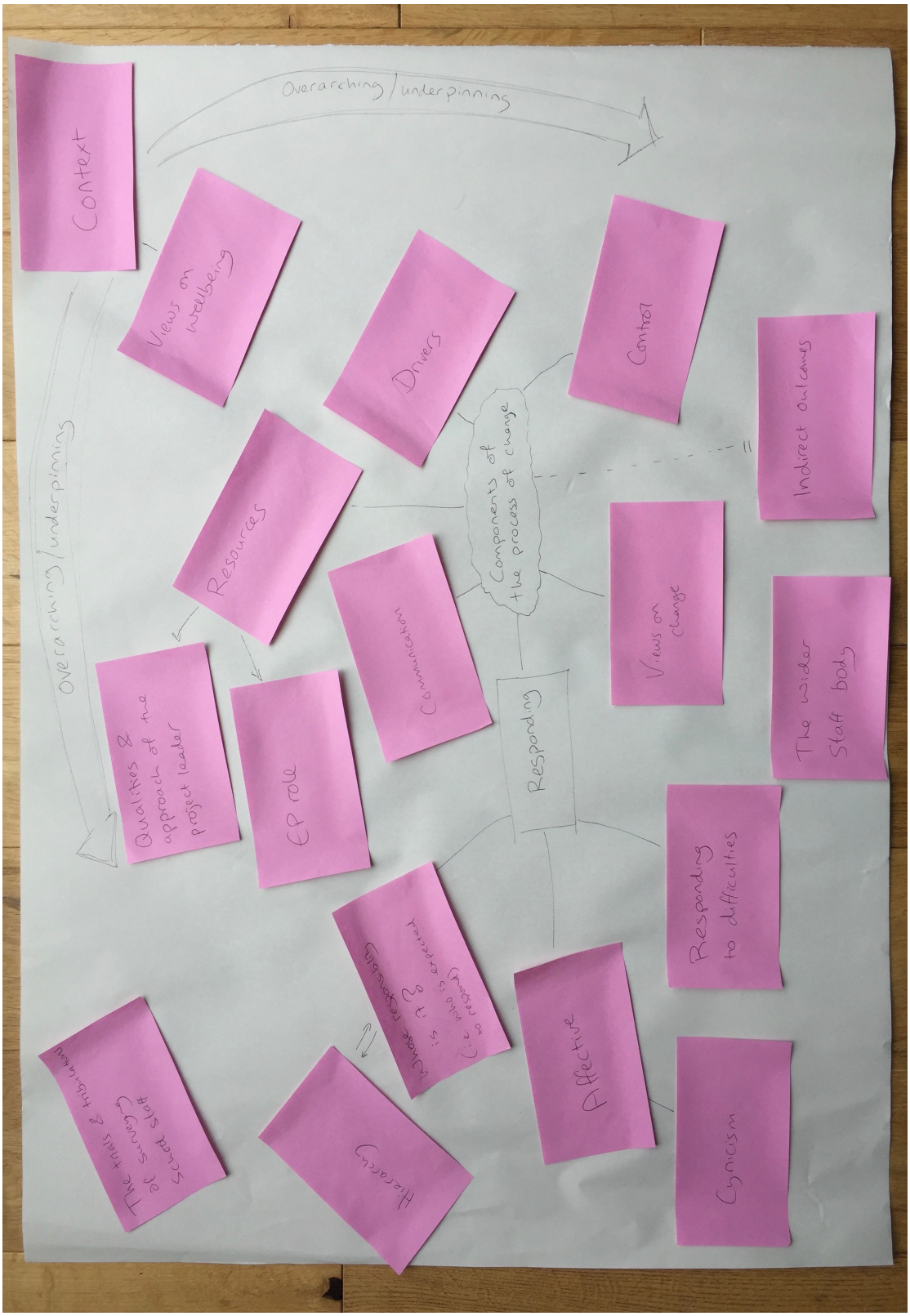

Figure 17: Thematic map produced during stage 3 of analysis

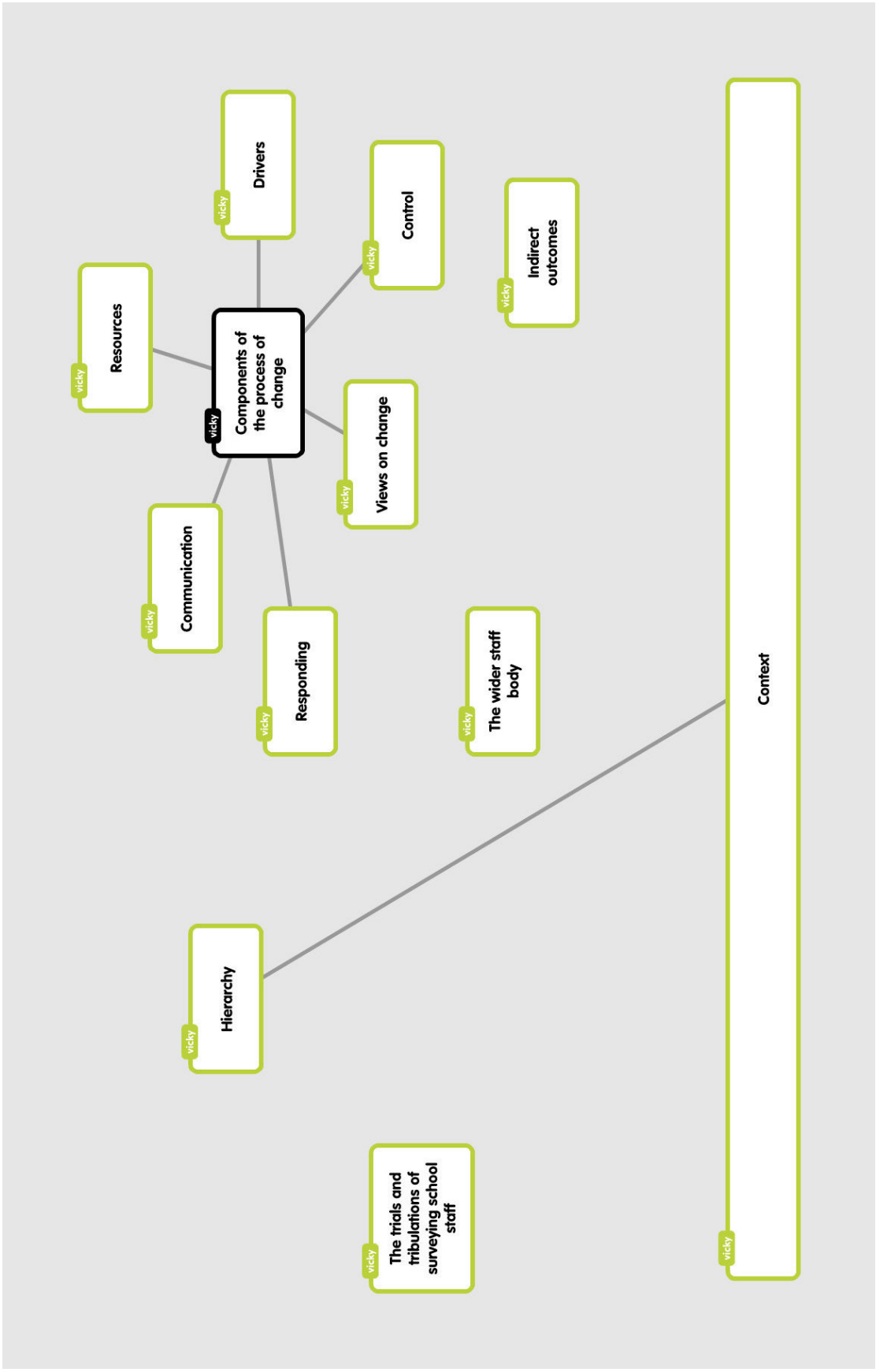

Figure 18: Thematic map produced during stage 4 of analysis

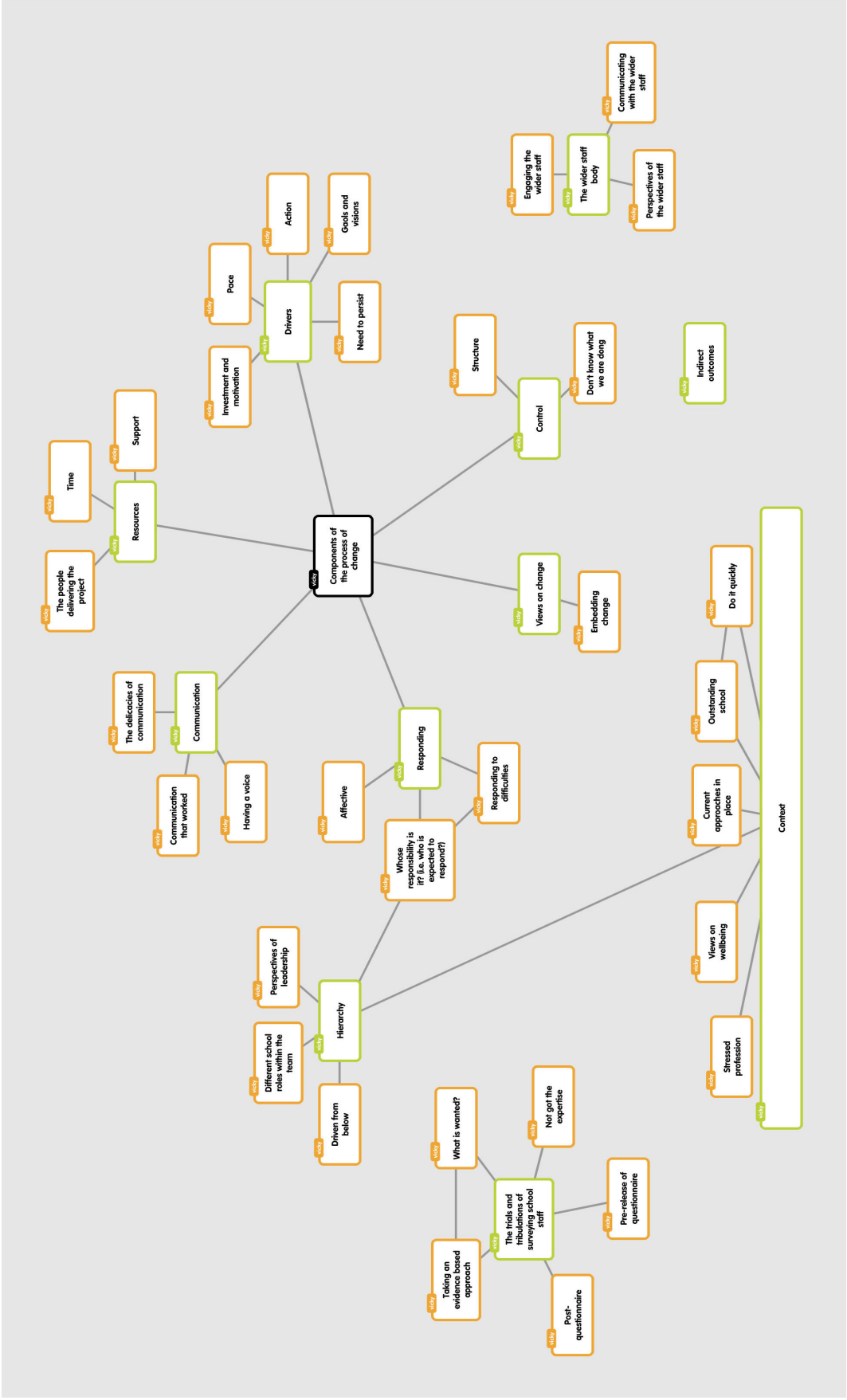

Figure 19: Thematic map produced during stage 4 of analysis

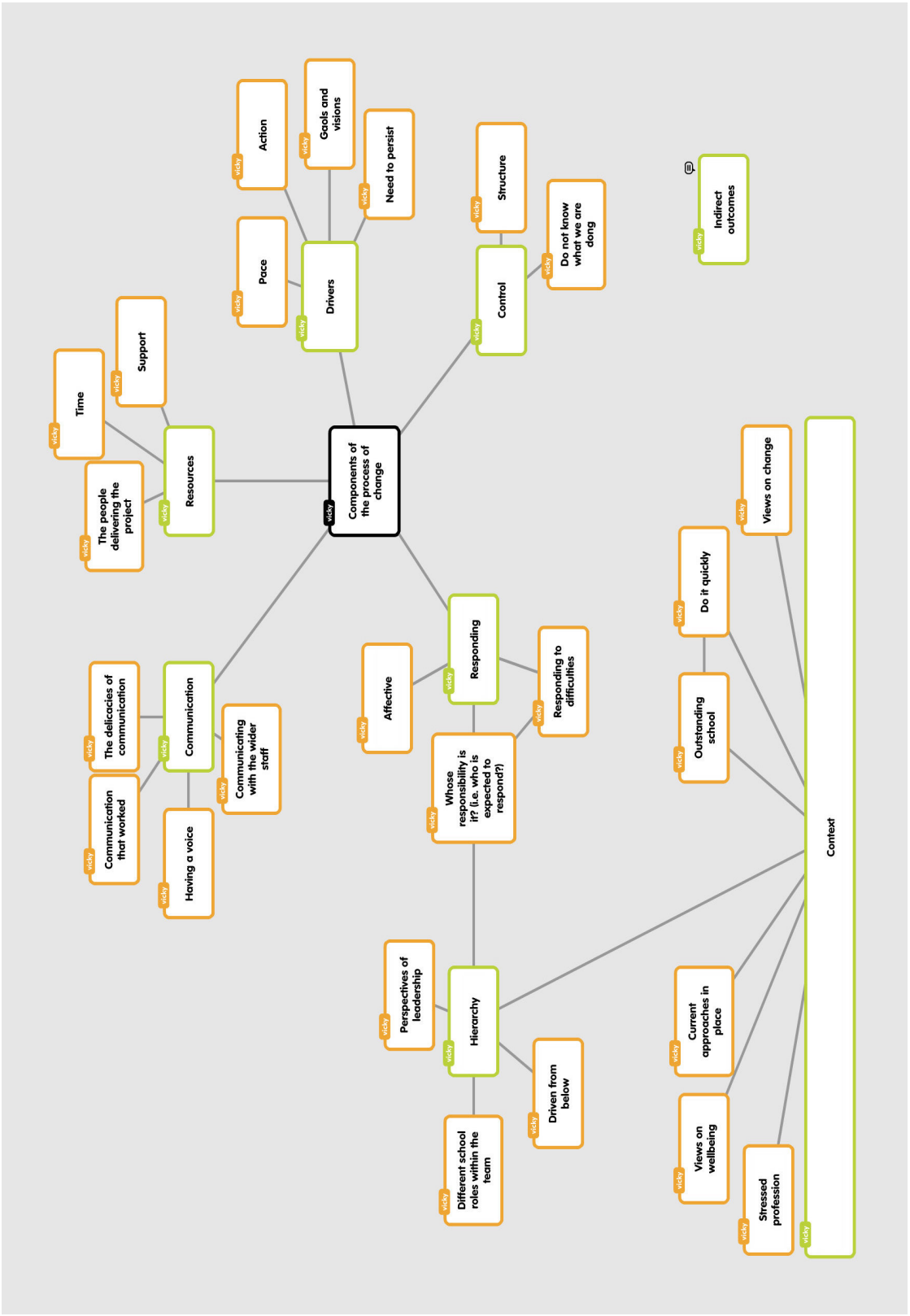

Figure 20: Thematic map produced during stage 5 of analysis

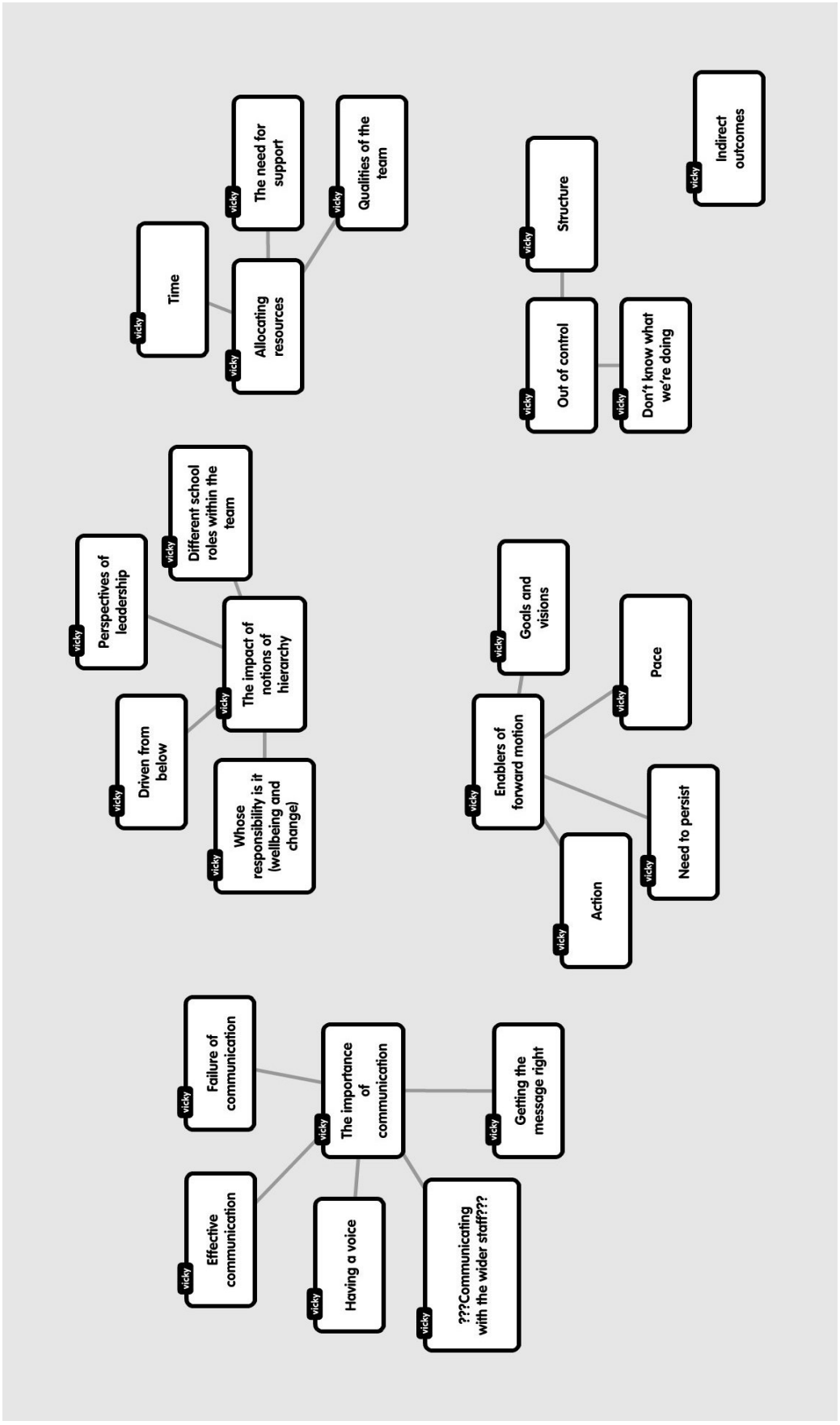

Figure 21: Thematic map produced during stage 5 of analysis

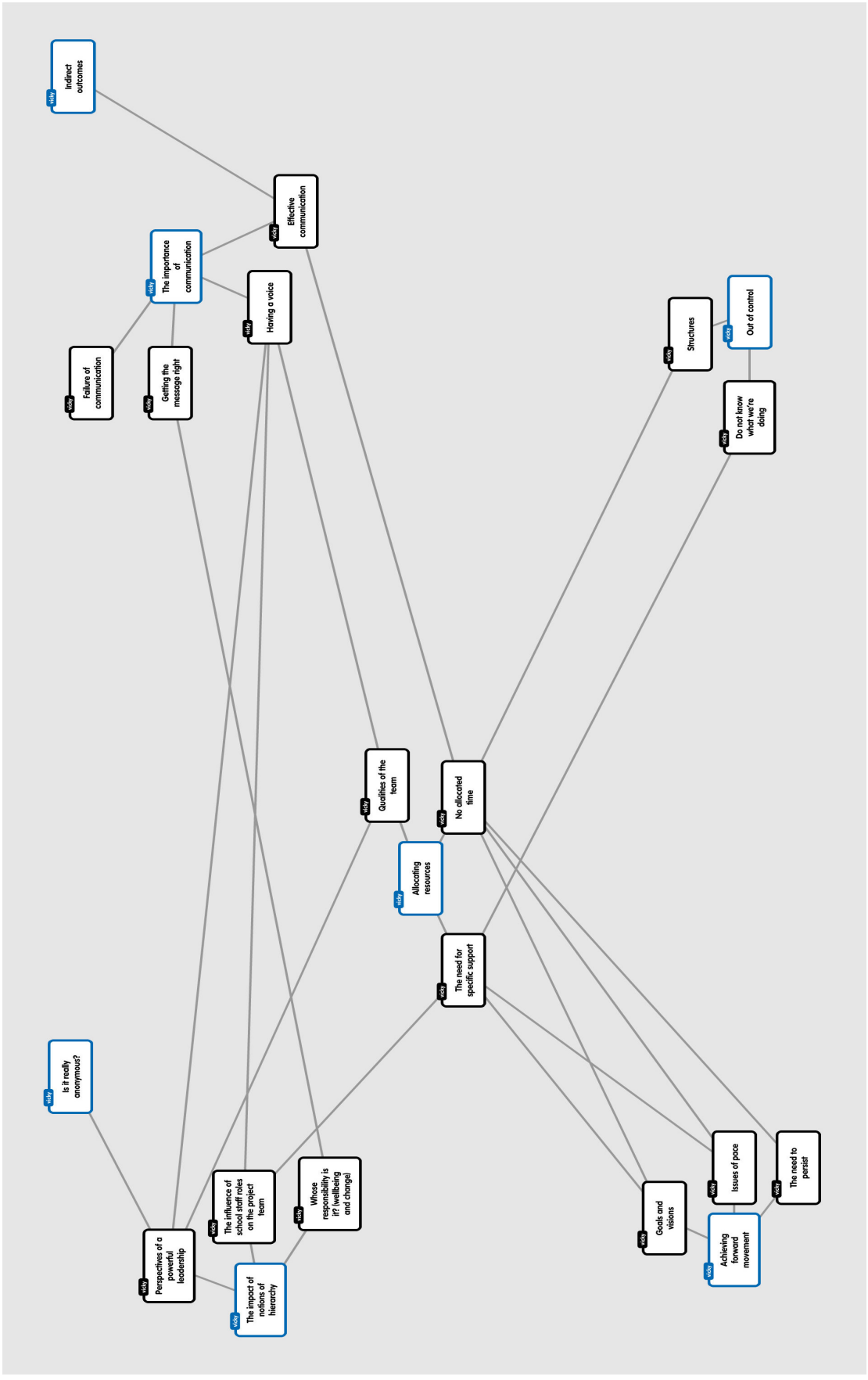

Figure 22: Thematic map produced during stage 5 of analysis

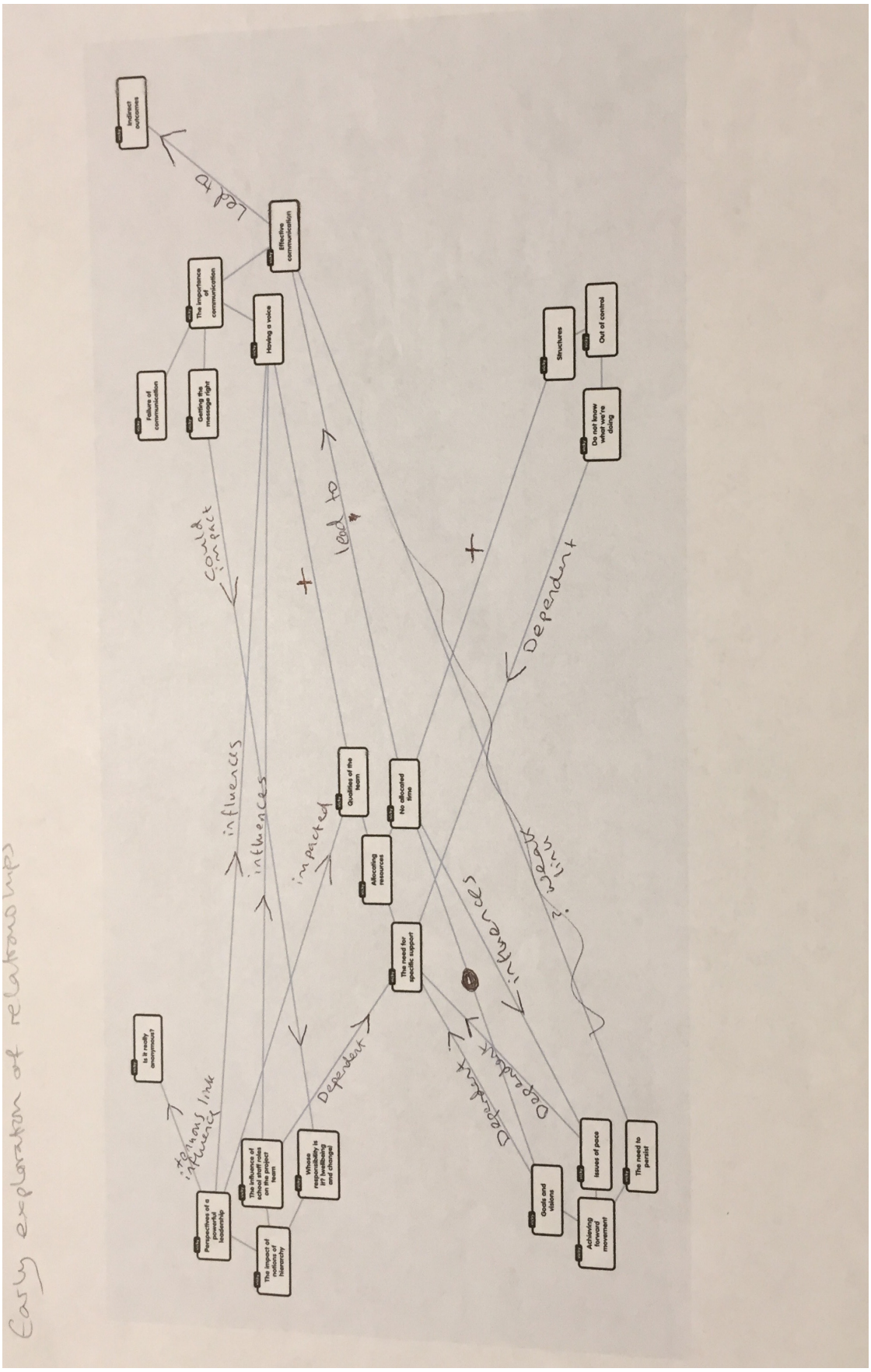

Figure 23: Thematic map produced during stage 5 of analysis

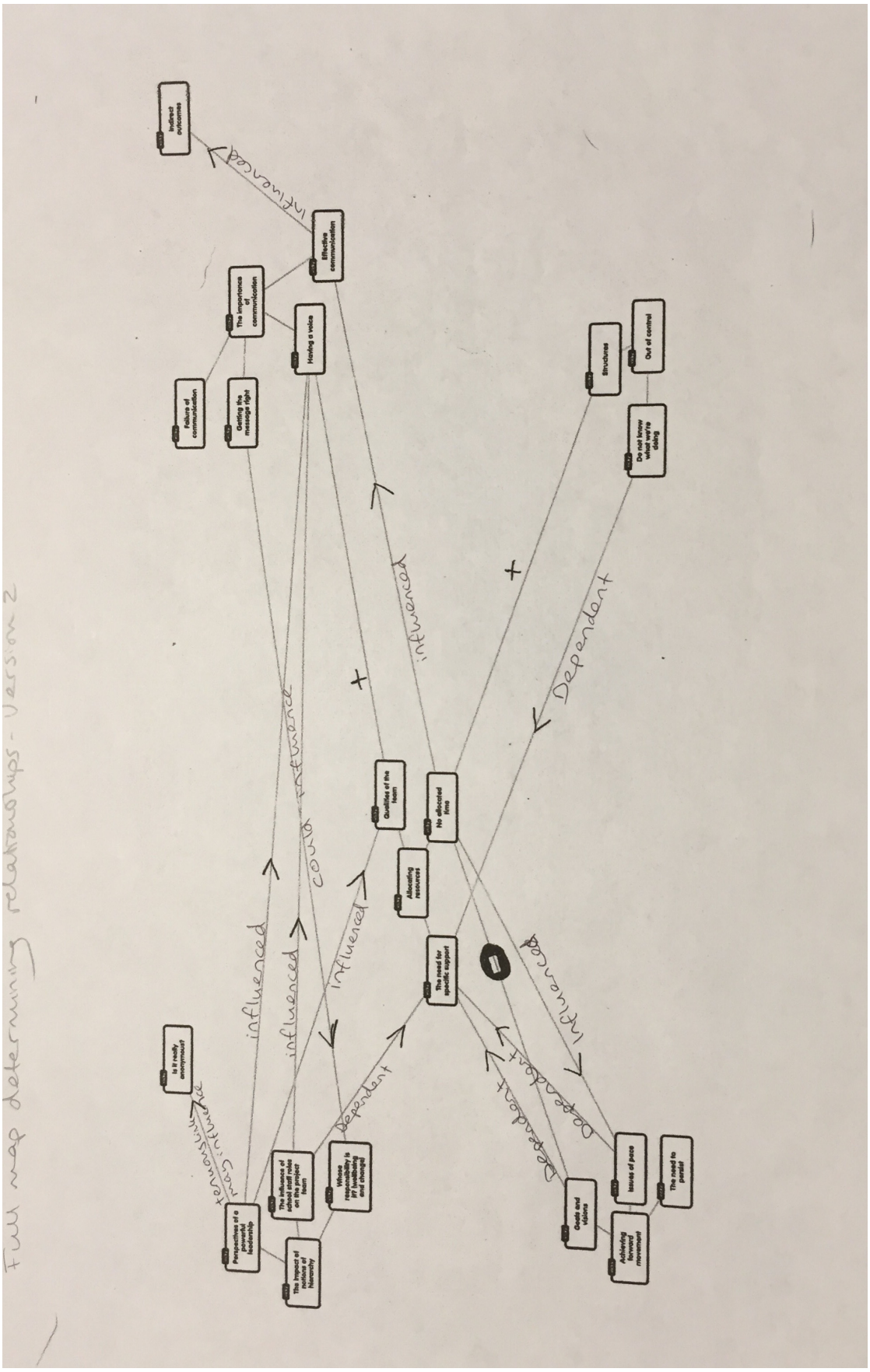

Figure 24: Thematic map produced during stage 5 of analysis

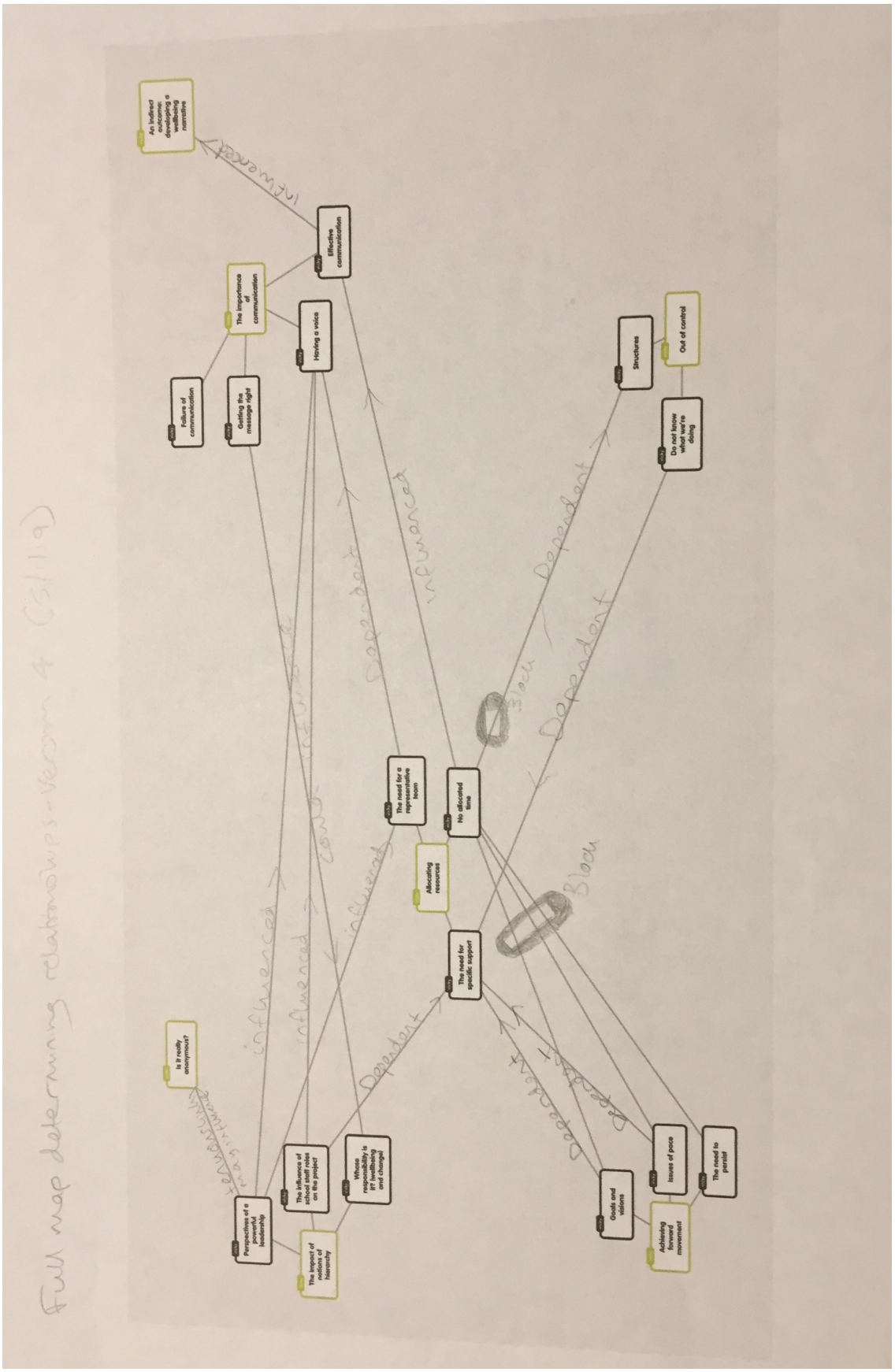

Figure 25: Thematic map produced during stage 5 of analysis

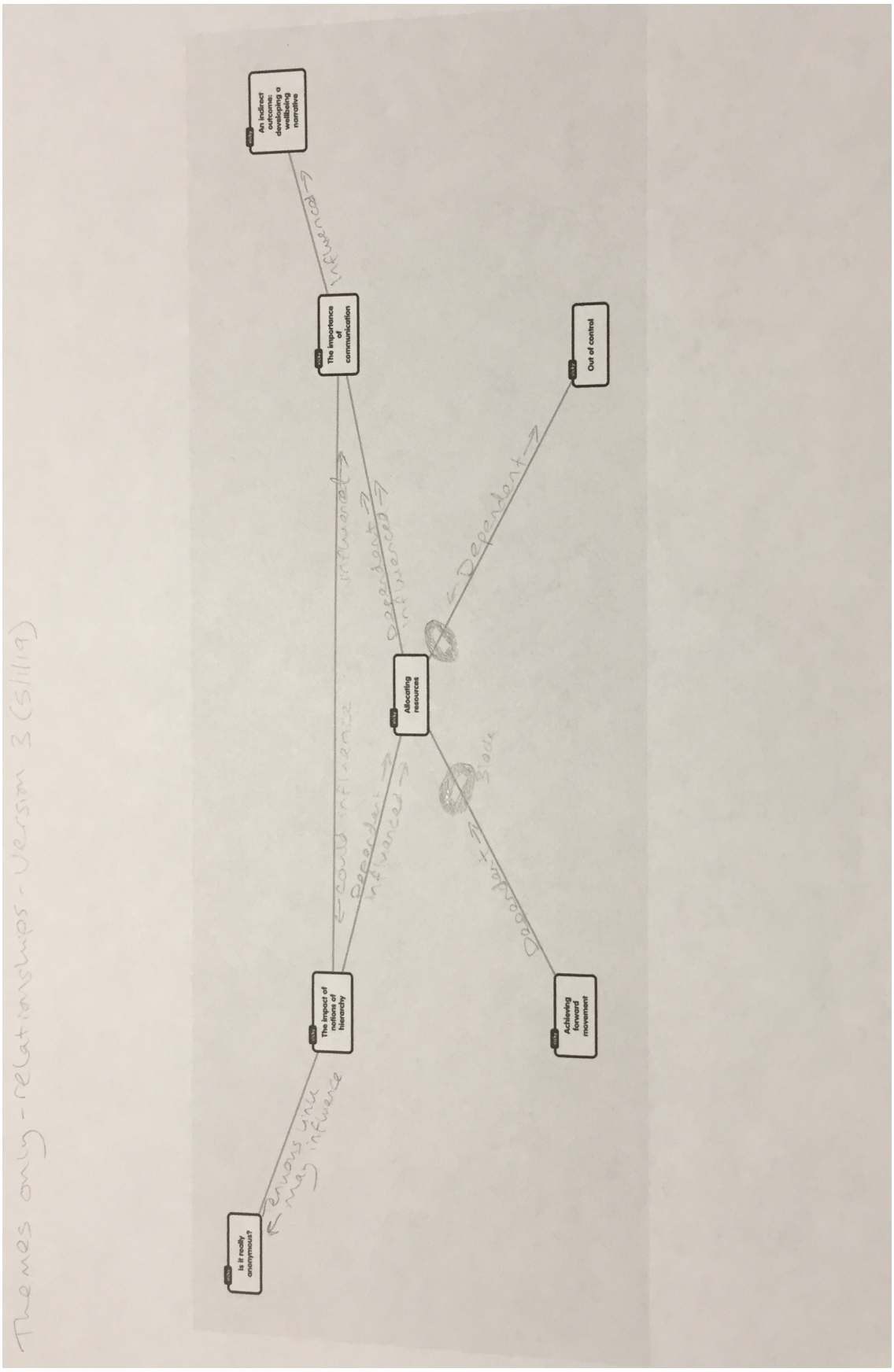
Themes only - relationships - Version 3 (6/11/19)
An indirect outcome: developing a wellbeing narrative
The importance of communication
Out of control
Allocating resources
The impact of notions of hierarchy
Achieving forward movement
Is it really anonymous?
Dependent
Dependent
Dependent

Figure 27: Thematic map produced during stage 5 of analysis

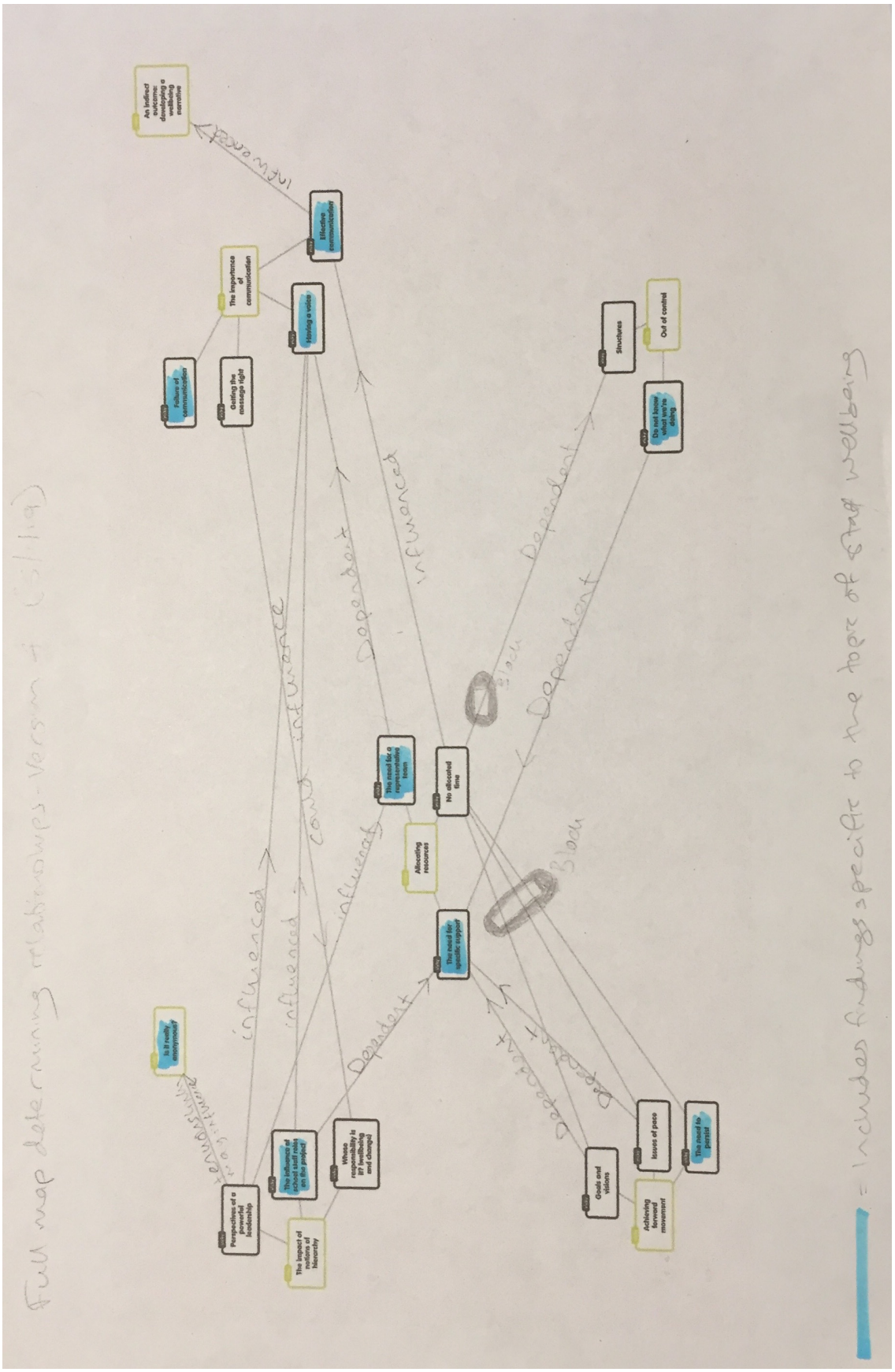

Figure 28: Thematic map produced during stage 6 of analysis

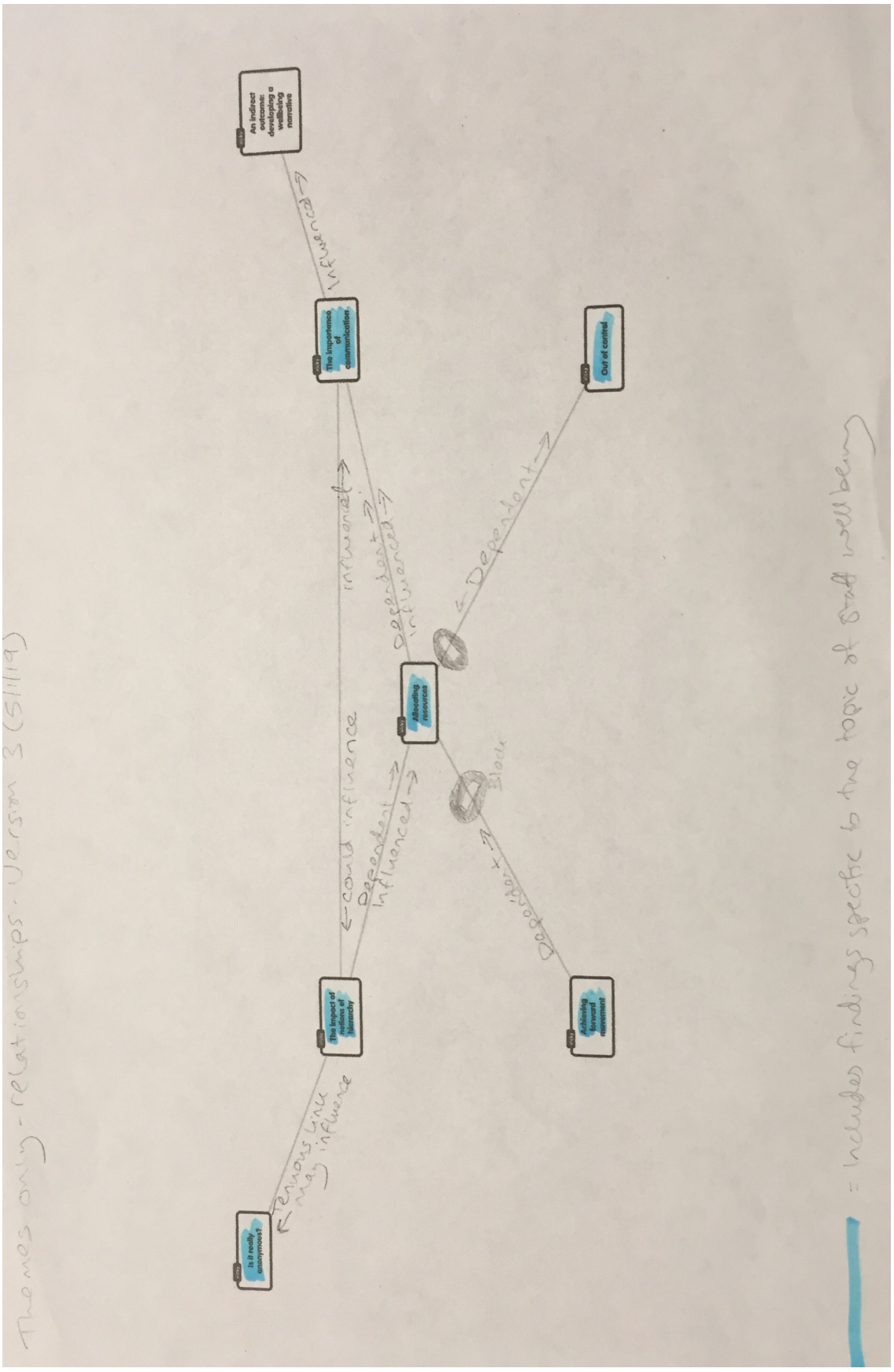

Figure 29: Thematic map produced during stage 6 of analysis

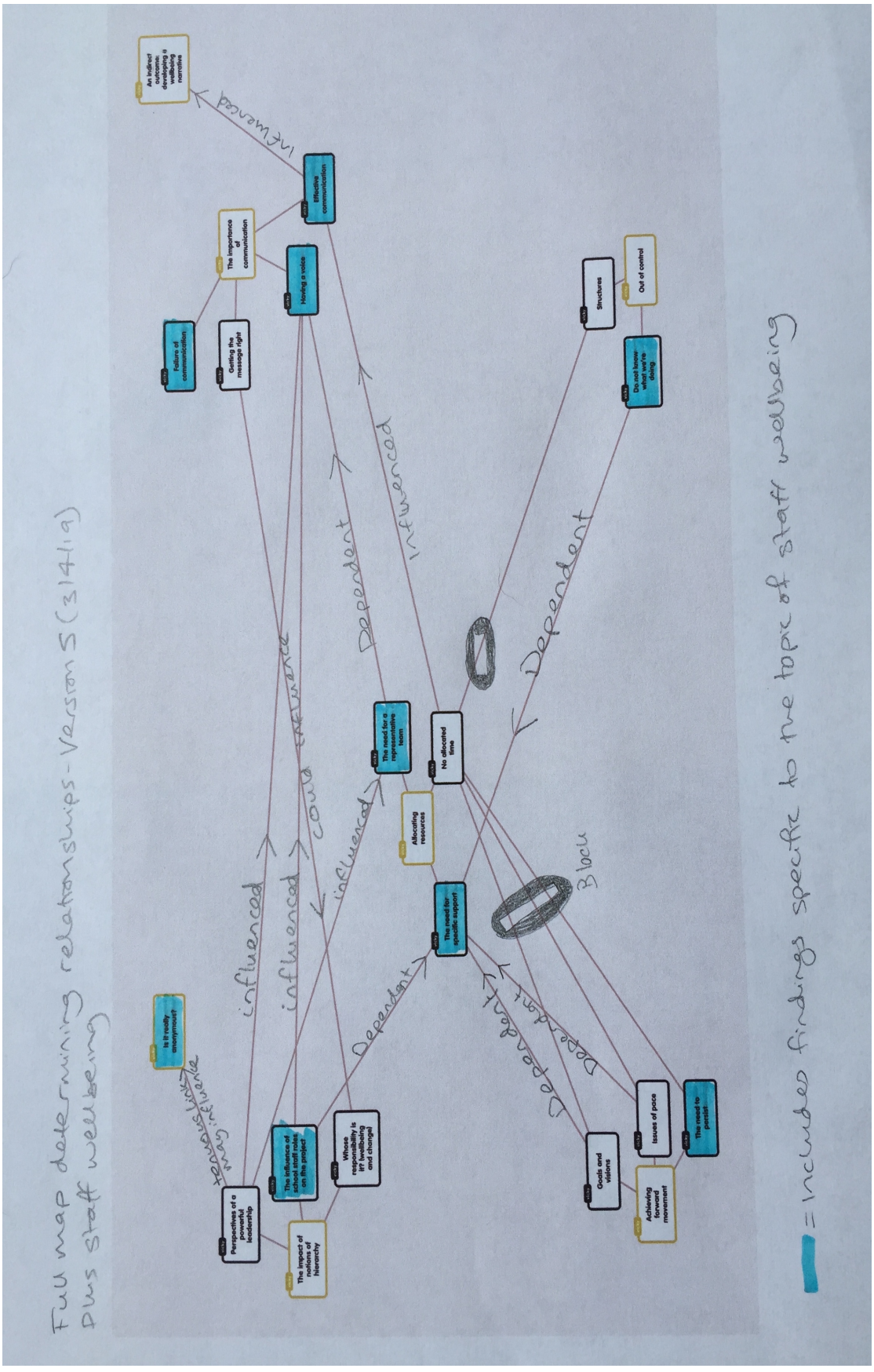

Figure 30: Thematic map produced during stage 6 of analysis

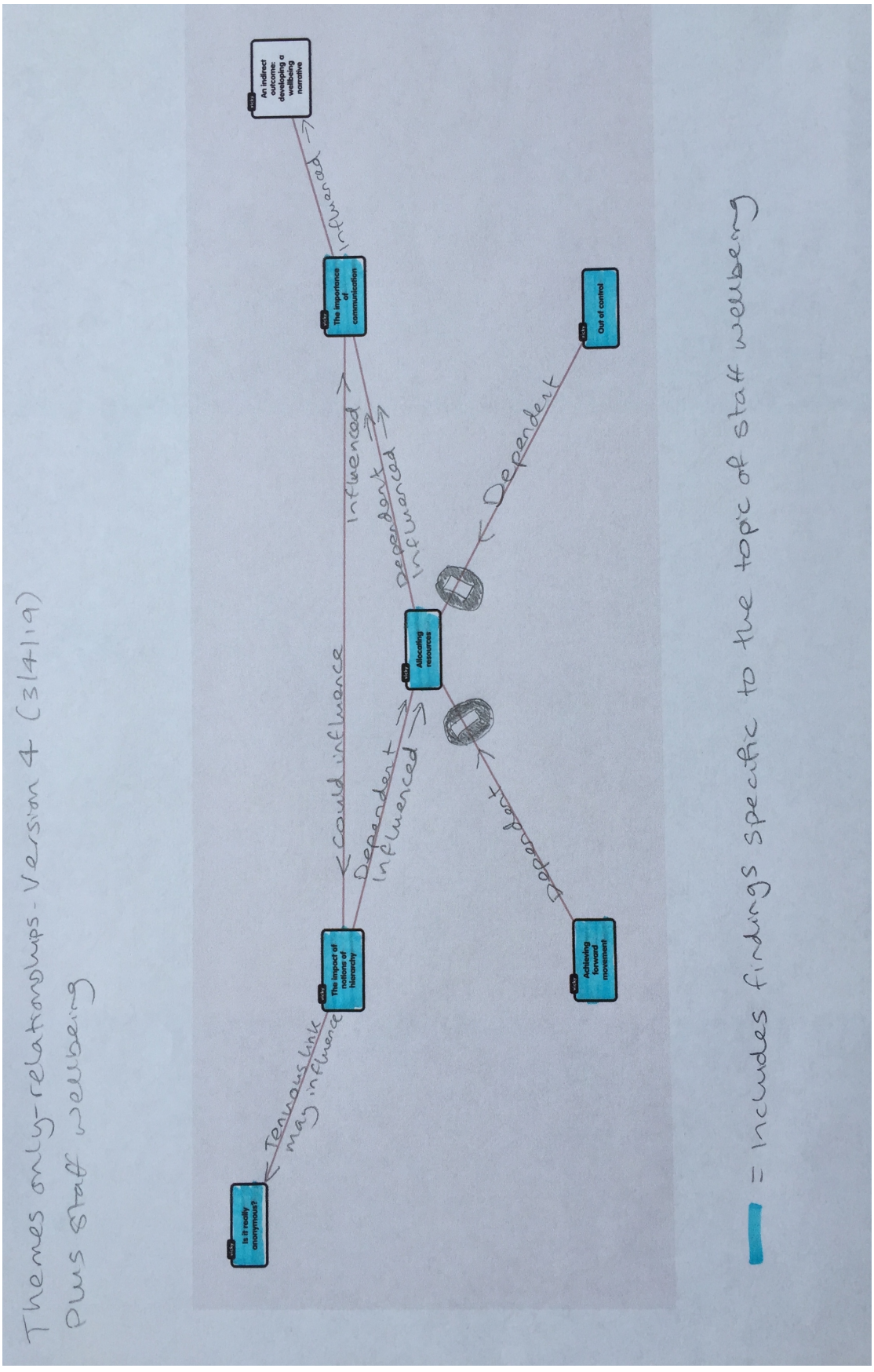

Figure 31: Thematic map produced during stage 6 of analysis

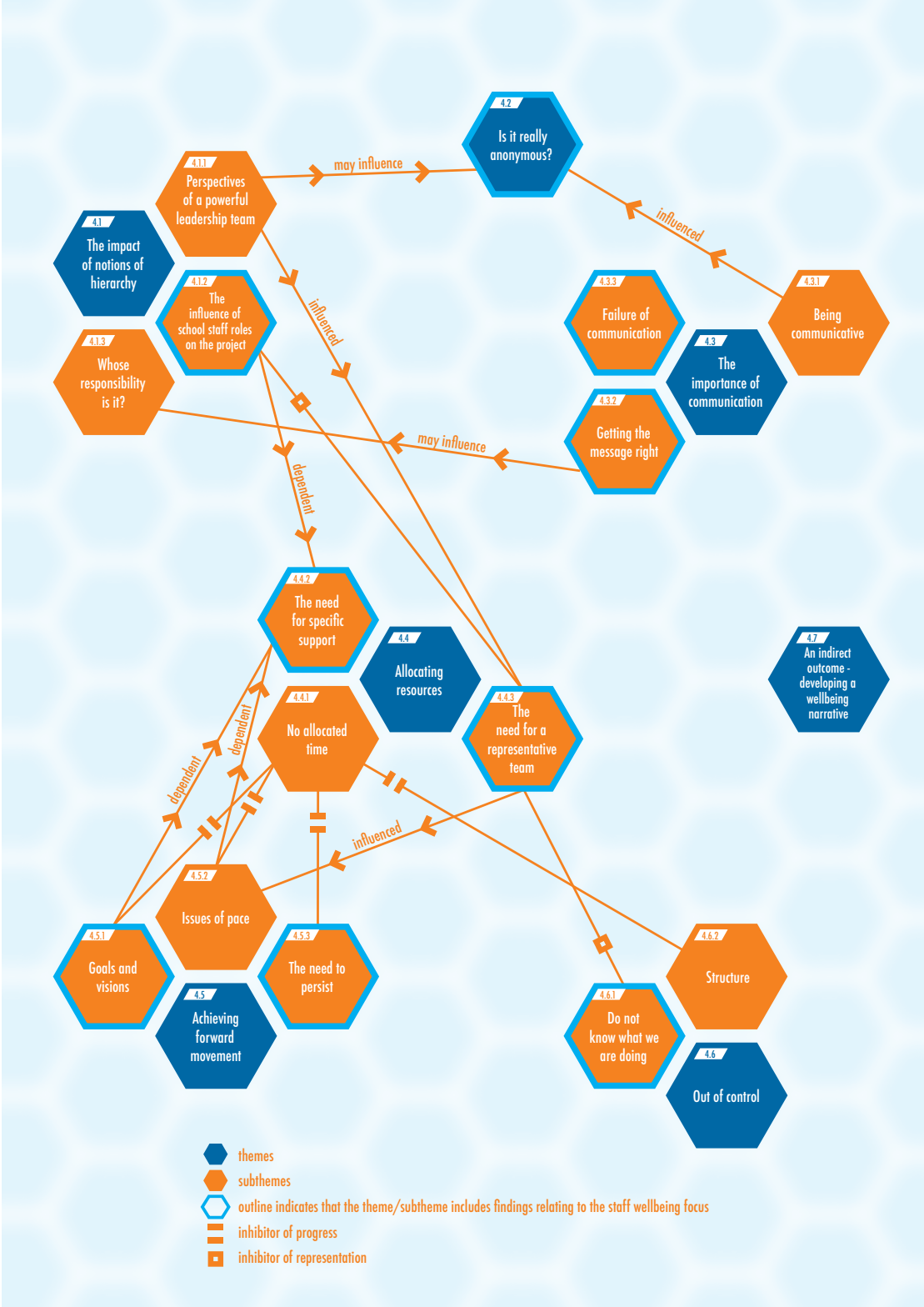

Figure 32: Thematic map produced at the end of the process of analysis

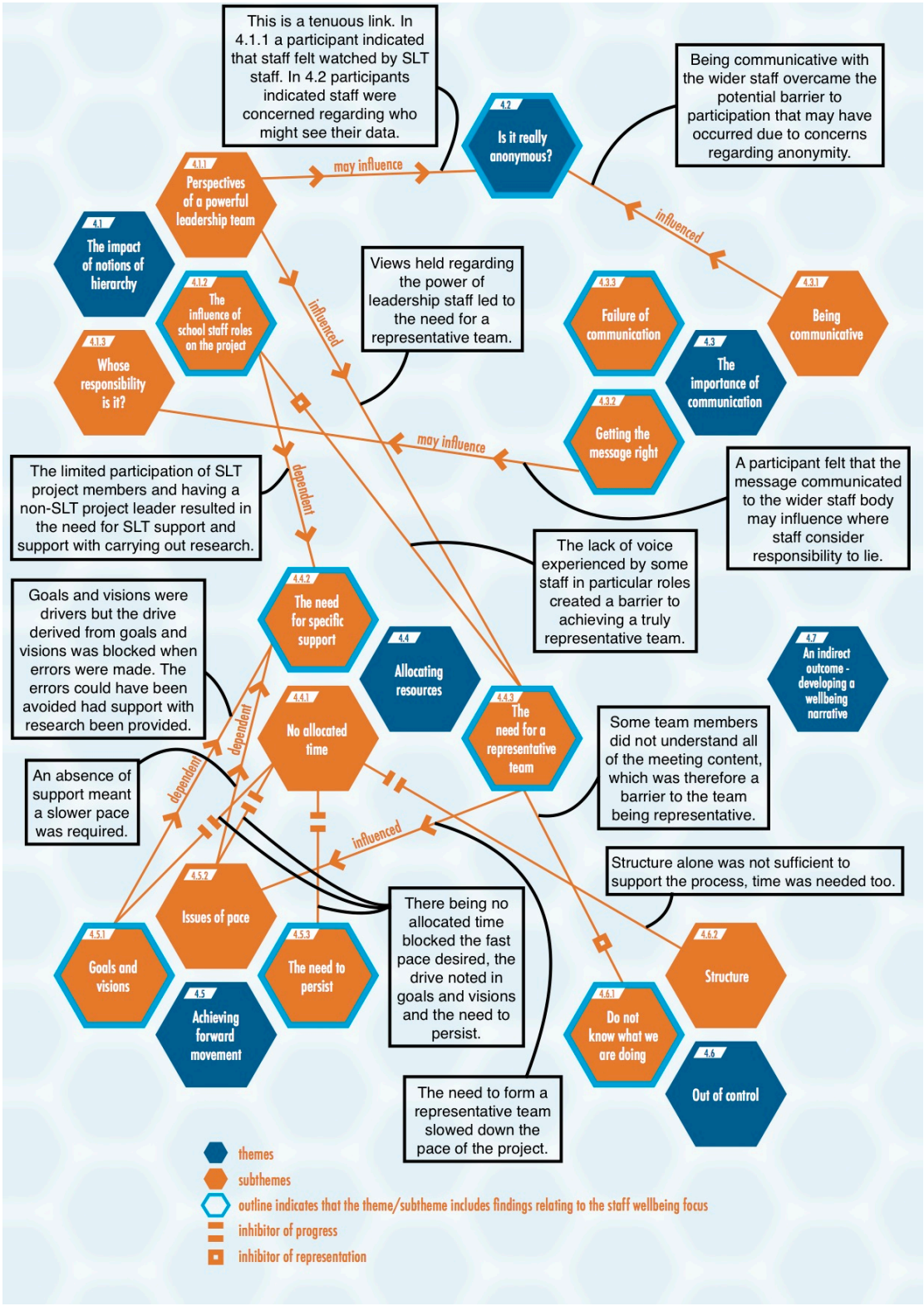

Figure 33: Final thematic map with explanations of relationships

APPENDIX K - ETHICAL APPROVAL

The following is the reply I received from the ethics committee granting me permission to proceed:

Hi Vicky

I have had a think about this and this approach does seem best at this stage.

So:

Please take this email as confirmation of ethical approval by the SPS REC on condition that [your supervisor] reports to committee meetings about the progress of the study and any issues that may arise.

If you require a formal letter of approval, please contact [name removed].

Good luck with your study. Please let me know if your research plan changes, you may need an amendment to your ethical approval.

APPENDIX L – RECRUITMENT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

EMAIL SENT TO POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS

Dear staff member,

My name is Vicky Bellamy, I am a trainee Educational Psychologist (EP) and I am [your school's] link EP. As part of my doctoral training I will carry out a piece of research. I am writing to tell you about the project. [The headteacher] has expressed an interest in this exciting venture and would like to invite you to be a part of it, should you so wish. Details of how to put yourself forward to take part in this project can be found at the end of this email.

A preventative approach to supporting the wellbeing of the school community

I have a particular interest in preventative approaches and wellbeing. Research tells us that supporting wellbeing in a preventative way is harder to achieve in a secondary school, compared with a primary setting. For my research I would like to support a secondary school to develop their preventative approach to supporting the wellbeing of the school community and observe the process of change. This does not imply any criticism of your school's achievements; on the contrary, this research is built on a positive model for supporting change. Research suggests a whole-school approach is most effective for supporting the wellbeing of the school community (the school community refers to all school parties – staff and students).

The change team

[The headteacher] is seeking to recruit a team of school staff to work on this venture. These people would make up the 'change team'. For effective whole school change to be achieved, it would be important to have a number of members of the senior leadership team involved and invested in the project (playing a key role in facilitating the implementation). The change team may also include a number of other school staff, who would bring valuable insight of current frontline school practice and could play an important part in delivery. I will seek to provide all members of the change team an equal voice in the change process. It may be decided that some students should be involved too, but that will be open for discussion in the early stages of the project.

What would involvement entail?

The decision-making and planning of developments will take place in consultation meetings with myself. I will be seeking for the whole of the change team to attend these meetings. At the initial meeting we will be exploring the area(s) of development you feel would be helpful and appropriate for your school. It may be that, having agreed an area of focus, some actions can be agreed at this

stage. Alternatively, we may wish to return for a second meeting to provide more time to explore what the specific changes may be and how these would be implemented. Actions agreed will then be implemented in the school and reviewed at a further meeting. As a result, further actions will be agreed, forming a cyclical process. I will be aiming to step out of the process by April 2017, to enable me to complete my analysis of the data and write up my findings. However, with the consultation/review mechanism in place you will be in a position to continue the school's developments in this area. As systemic change takes time, for the effect to be substantial, continuation of the project beyond my involvement would be recommended. Exploration of how this will be achieved can be built into the consultation meetings.

I can be flexible as to the time of day that meetings will occur. However, if it is not feasible for all members of the staff team to be available at the same time during the school day, it will be necessary for meetings to be held after the school day. Meetings will last between 1 and 1.5 hours. Frequency of meetings can be flexible to meet the needs of the change team, however, as a benchmark I would suggest they could occur monthly.

The attached information sheet provides details about the study's aims, how data will be collected and some additional information.

If you have any questions about the project, do not hesitate to contact me on the email address below.

How to express an interest in participating in this project

If you would like to put yourself forward to be part of the change team please email me at [email address removed] by 18th April 2016. Should you wish to take part, your participation will become known to other members of the change team and potentially to the wider school community. In your email please state your name and your role. If you have any limitations regarding your availability (e.g. after school or part time working) please specify these. You will then be invited to meet myself and complete consent forms. Once the initial change team has been recruited the project will commence. Myself and [the headteacher] have put a date in the diary of Thursday 21st April at 3.15pm. It is proposed that this slot will be used for me to complete the consent process and for the first change team meeting to take place.

Thank you for your interest.

Best wishes,

Vicky Bellamy

INFORMATION SHEET SENT TO POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS

Wellbeing in School

Facilitated and studied by Vicky Bellamy

Trainee Educational Psychologist and student at the University of Bristol

> 'Social and emotional well-being' refers to a state of positive mental health and wellness. It involves a sense of optimism, confidence, happiness, clarity, vitality, self-worth, achievement, having a meaning and purpose, engagement, having supportive and satisfying relationships with others and understanding oneself, and responding effectively to one's own emotions.
>
> (Weare, 2015)

[The headteacher] would like to invite you to take part in the following project. The project will provide the opportunity for your school to develop its approach to supporting school community wellbeing. School community is defined as all members of the school; both staff and students. Taking part in this project will also provide a learning opportunity around implementing whole-school change.

You are being invited to be a member of the 'change team'. The change team will be leading the project and carrying out a plan-do-review process (see details in email). As a member of the change team you will have an integral part in the planning, implementing and reviewing of changes to school systems and practice to promote school community wellbeing.

The resulting thesis (that I will produce) will document the findings of this study. This will provide insight into the process of developing a preventative approach to supporting school community wellbeing in a secondary school. All research data will be treated as confidential. I will not name the school or geographical area in my thesis, I will use pseudonyms for all participants and will change or remove any details that could identify an individual. However, there are limits to confidentiality. Data collected during the change team meetings will be familiar to all members of the change team, thus quotes extracted from the recordings will be identifiable to members of the change team. It is also likely that other members of the school community will become aware of your role in the project and thus

your participation will not be anonymous. All data will be stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act on a password-protected server for 20 years.

Once a small team of school representatives have been recruited, who will make up the change team, the aims of my research will be to follow the process of change as the team:

- Identifies how they could improve the school's preventative approach to supporting the well-being of the school community
- Implements agreed actions in relation to this
- Reviews the actions taken
- Agrees further actions in response to the review and so on

I intend to participate in the change process by facilitating consultation meetings for the change team. However, all decisions made and actions to be implemented will be led by the change team (not myself). The process of change will be planned and reviewed in consultation meetings, which will be audio recorded. Any email communications (between myself and participants) about the project will also be used as data unless it is specifically requested that a particular email is not included. Implementation of the actions will be observed where appropriate and some form of data (audio recording and/or observation notes) will be collected. I also hope to carry out interviews with members of the change team. These will be audio recorded and this will also be used as research data. I anticipate interviewing members of the change team on two occasions; in the summer term of 2016 and the spring term of 2017. Further I plan to carry out a short online questionnaire, which you will be able to use anonymously to provide critique on my involvement (or anything else you wish to anonymously comment on). Your response to these questionnaires will, with your consent, be included as data, although you will also be free to provide such comment without consenting to it being used as research data. All of the collected data will be used to study the process of change occurring in relation to this project, with a particular interest in aspects that supported and hindered change.

It is hoped that the project will directly benefit the school community.

Should staff and/or students wish to carry out any school research within this project, there will be the opportunity to develop research skills, which I will support the school with.

Any complaints about my research practice should be made to my supervisor by emailing [email address removed].

This research has been approved by the University of Bristol's School for Policy Studies Research Ethics Committee.

CONSENT FORM

School for Policy Studies

8 Priory Road

Bristol, BS8 1TX

Wellbeing in School

Please indicate Yes or No.

I would like to take part in this research project.	**Yes** ☐ **No** ☐
I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study.	**Yes** ☐ **No** ☐
I understand that:	
• My participation is voluntary and I can change my mind and withdraw from this research project at any time, without giving reason.	**Yes** ☐ **No** ☐
• All the data collected will be treated as confidential unless there is a risk of harm to myself or someone else.	**Yes** ☐ **No** ☐
• There are limits to confidentiality and other members of the school community will know that I am participating due to the group nature of the change team and potential identification during implementation.	**Yes** ☐ **No** ☐
• All practicable steps will be taken to ensure information is stored safely.	**Yes** ☐ **No** ☐
• The consent forms will be stored for 20 years in an appropriate secure storage facility. This is a requirement of the University of Bristol.	**Yes** ☐ **No** ☐
• Information gathered during this research project will be included in a thesis, which may become publically available.	**Yes** ☐ **No** ☐

- The researcher may seek publication of a paper, using information gathered during this research project. **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐

Data Protection Act

- Data collected about me during my participation in this research project will be stored on a computer. Any files containing identifying information will be stored securely in accordance with University of Bristol ethics protocol. All data included in the thesis and any subsequent papers will be anonymised. I agree to the University of Bristol recording and processing the information I provide. **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐

- This information will be used only for the purpose of this research project and my consent is conditional upon the University complying with its duties and obligations under the Data Protection Act **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐

I agree to:

- Being audio recorded in consultation meetings, implementation activities (where appropriate) and in interview. **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐

- Being observed during implementation (where appropriate) and the researcher making notes about implementation. **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐

- Email communication about the project (between myself and the researcher) being used as data, unless I specify otherwise in relation to a specific email. **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐

Signed……..

Name (printed)……..

Date:……

APPENDIX M – EMAIL CLARIFYING MY ROLE

I sent the following email to participants to clarify my role:

Hi all,

As some of you know I follow each wellbeing meeting with an anonymous questionnaire; I will send this out shortly to those of you who attended the meeting last Thursday. Before sending this out I want to clarify my role as 1) there has been a shift in my role since the last meeting and 2) this has been a muddy area and I think it needs some clarification. Previously I have been supporting the project in my role as Trainee Educational Psychologist (in a facilitatory and consultative role) and also studying the facilitators and barriers to the changes being made to school practice (i.e. the implementation of the wellbeing questionnaire so far). Since [name removed] took on the role of leading the project I have been stepping back my involvement in supporting the project and am attempting to be purely in the role as researcher. There is a caveat to this; I told [the project leader] that if she wanted any support that I was still happy to provide this but that the onus is on her (or any of you) to ask for this; i.e. I will try to remain in a back seat role as much as possible (I am only human though and may overstep this on occasion, particularly as I was more involved previously, so apologies if this happens).

My research is an ethnographic study. This means I have been seeking to be involved in the life of the project to enable me to gain a deep understanding of the facilitators and barriers to implementation. I am aware that my level of involvement may have some impact on the project. It is useful for me to have an appreciation of how this might be playing out and thus I will be continuing to provide a brief anonymous questionnaire after each meeting to enable you to provide feedback if you wish. It is not compulsory for you to complete this, but any feedback will be gratefully received. Questionnaire to follow shortly.

Any questions, do please ask.

Many thanks,

Vicky

APPENDIX N – QUALITY EVALUATION

The following is my quality evaluation, using Yardley's (2015) framework.

Sensitivity to context	In Chapter Two - Literature Review, the theoretical and research base for the present study is outlined. Theories and models of organisational change are explored. Literature that most dominantly focuses on how change in schools is implemented is presented. Then organisational change associated with implementing staff wellbeing and related practices is considered, looking at both the literature on this from organisations other than schools and the school-based literature. This provides a context for the research questions that the present study seeks to answer. Ethical approval was sought and gained for the present study prior to commencement of research activities. This and key ethical factors associated with the study are reflected on in Chapter Three - Methodology. Interviews included the use of open questioning for the gathering of participant views. Consideration was given to the socio-cultural context of participants. An example of this can be seen at the end of the subtheme "The influence of school staff roles on the project" where issues relating to equality of voice of a participant are considered in relation to their lower hierarchical role in the school.
Commitment and Rigour	A purpose of the present study (as outlined in Chapter Two - Literature Review section "Positioning the present study") was to provide an in-depth view of how a staff wellbeing project is implemented. I therefore selected a single case study design to enable the greatest depth of study possible. The school was selected due to their interest and willingness to engage in such a project. To provide the best view of the implementation and processes associated with the project (to answer the research

	questions) I recruited all project team members and invited them all to interview. Interviews were carried out both early on and at the end of the research period. The early interviews were designed to capture initial views that may be lost with time, whilst the interviews at the end of the research period provided the opportunity to look back and consider the process (to date) as a whole. By inviting all project team members to interview and interviewing a number of them on both occasions, I was able to triangulate their views. This sometimes resulted in the collection of shared views regarding aspects of the process, giving more weight to particular findings, and sometimes provided conflicting views, providing rich and nuanced understanding about the process experienced. A respected thematic analysis process (Braun and Clarke, 2006) was carefully followed resulting in a thorough analysis. Examples and details relating to this can be seen in Appendices H-J and the examiners are provided with the electronic NVivo file of the coded and themed data and a recording of an interview to accompany the transcript provided in Appendix G).
Coherence and transparency	The coherence of the study is outlined as follows. The significance of the study and the aims of the research are presented in Chapter One – Introduction. The positioning of the present study in relation to the literature can be viewed at the end of Chapter Two - Literature Review, providing a purpose for the present research. The research questions were devised in response this purpose. The research was designed to meet these purposes (as outlined in Chapter Three - Methodology). How the findings relate to the research questions can be found in summary at the end of Chapter Four - Findings. Detailed discussion of the findings and prior literature, in relation to the research questions, can be found in Chapter Five - Discussion. As indicated in the above section “Commitment and rigour”, examples and details of the analysis process can be viewed in Appendices G-J and in the digital file and recording provided to the examiners, providing

	transparency of approach. Transparency regarding my beliefs and my role in the research has been provided (see Chapter Three - Methodology and Chapter Six - Reflexive Account).
Impact and importance	The findings have relevance for schools attempting to implement staff wellbeing projects and for EP services that wish to consider supporting schools with such endeavours. The findings are also of relevance to those determining national policy, where there may be consideration of national agendas associated with improving staff wellbeing, in response to prior findings highlighting school staff stress, as outlined in Chapter One - Introduction.

Table 14: Quality evaluation

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